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HOW WE MADE RHODESIA

Just published.

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THE CAMEL:

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BY MAJOR ARTHUR GLYN LEONARD,
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HOW WE MADE RHODESIA

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BY

MAJOR ARTHUR GLYN LEONARD

LATE SECOND EAST LANCASHIRE REGIMENT, AND OF
THE CHARTERED COMPANY'S POLICE

Author of "The Camel: Its Uses and Management"

SECOND EDITION

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & Co., LTD.
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1896

TO
CECIL RHODES,
WHO INITIATED,
TO
THE CHARTERED COMPANY,
WHO AIDED,
AND TO
JAMESON
AND THE MEN WHO MADE
Rhodesia,
I DEDICATE THESE PAGES
AS A SMALL MEMENTO OF
A GREAT WORK



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INTRODUCTORY

ENCOURAGED, generally, by the present outlook in South Africa, but by the Matabele crisis in particular, I offer these reminiscences to the public with much diffidence, yet in the hope that they will interest Englishmen at home, to know how a possession equal in area to France and Germany, was added to the Empire through the vigorous measures of able men.

A splendid trophy it was—achieved by the clear heads, cool hearts, and strong hands of men of action, by the right men in the right place, by pioneers of civilisation and of Great Britain's exuberant vitality, ceaseless activity, and adventurous energy. They were stigmatised by some of their own countrymen as adventurers; and adventurers most certainly they were, but only in the true spirit and liberal sense of adventure. Men, with names such as Rhodes and Jameson at their head, of whom not only Great but Greater Britain should be proud!

Men of the stamp who have made England and her colonies what they are, and who, if England to herself prove true, will make them even still greater!

Culled, as these records are, from diaries kept and letters written by me during the years 1890-93, when Rhodesia was in the first stages of its existence, and coming into close contact, as I did, with everybody from Sir Henry (now Lord) Loch and Rhodes down to the tramping prospector with his swag on his back—the Sundowner of South Africa—I am also

in hope that they may prove interesting to those who would like to look back upon the different phases of development and expansion, in which, like myself, they took a modest part.

To conclude. In these pages I have, in accordance with an invariable rule of mine, merely taken people as I found them, and recorded facts as they occurred. They stand very much as they stood in my diaries and letters home; for it has always been my belief that a plain tale serves best when plainly told. I trust, therefore, that they will be received in a like spirit, and that the perusal of them will give the same pleasure to their readers as the writing of them gave me.

HOW WE MADE RHODESIA

CHAPTER I.

PILAPWIE.

From the 29th March to 13th May, 1890.

IN consequence of an offer of a troop in the Chartered Company's Police, received by cable from Sir Fred Carrington on the 29th of March, 1890, I left Southampton on May the 4th in the Union Company's steamer *Tartar*, arriving at Cape Town, after a pleasant passage, on April the 23rd, a day famous, by the way, as having, over 300 years ago, produced our greatest poet. Much impressed as I was by the natural beauty of the place and its immediate surroundings, the bold outline of Table Mountain, flanked by the Lion's Head *en couchant*, forming a background that, as we approached from the sea, was splendidly imposing, I was anxious to get on, so had little time to look about, as in 24 hours after landing I was in the train on my way to Kimberley. As we rattled along over the Karoo I was very much struck by its comparative fertility, as some of the Colonials on board, who had evidently never seen the sandy expanse of the great Sahara, or the arid wastes of Libya, had described it to me as a desert, and it occurred to me as being a country suitable in every way for the camel.

A week at Kimberley, where I met with great kindness and hospitality from every one, passed most pleasantly, and, among other things, I was initiated into the mysteries of De Beers Consolidated both above and below ground. My eyes were bewildered by the unusual and dazzling spectacle of thousands of sparkling brilliants that were worth millions. Still in a hurry to get on, the 4th of May found me at the

Post Office, along with seven other passengers, in addition to a driver and leader, and over a ton of luggage and mails.

Oh, for the pathos and humour of a Dickens or Cruikshank, that I might sketch for you, either in pen or pencil, my first experience of a South African post cart! Tender recollections of the swinging "doolie," the creaking "dak-garri," and the jingling "ekka," haunt odd corners of my memory, but Banagher never banged the devil more effectually than the Cape cart did all other conveyances I have ever travelled in.

Of the passengers, one was abnormally stout, another enormously tall, and a third a living skeleton, while the rest of us were of the ordinary run of average humanity. We looked at each other in a critical, taking-stock, what-the-dickens-do-you-want-here? sort of way, and the long man, a friend of mine, who I knew had a precise, mathematical mind, began an inward calculation, first algebraic, then trigonometric, as to how we were all going to fit in. Fit, did I call it? Packed sardine fashion I ought to say, or squashed into pulp like mashed turnips, would be, perhaps, more applicable.

The cart had room enough for two to travel in with tolerable comfort, and four with a certain amount of discomfort; but nine of us, two being considerably above the average, besides 2500 lbs. of correspondence, were a trifle too much for it.

However, after much outward glaring and inward criticism of each other, we were soon on speaking terms, and got into the cart as best we could, but how we managed it is a mental problem that to this day remains unsolved, even by my long friend, who, with unusual energy, applied every equation and theorem he could think of to unravel the mystery, but without success.

I was wedged in between two extremes. On one side the stout man taking up the whole seat; on the other the skeleton jammed against the side of the cart, against which our luggage was strapped. Where he came in I cannot say, but that I was in the middle of it there was no mistake. Wedged, did I call it? Never has pancake undergone the flattening process more vigorously and what awful salients, in the shape of elbow and knee joints, which ran into me like blunt razors, and remained there, had the skeleton!

Where the long man stowed his legs, a good yard of which hung over the splash-board, frequently coming in useful by tickling up the wheelers when they grew lazy, I cannot say.

All I know is that my sympathy for him was heartfelt, for the agonies I suffered from my own legs, which are of a respectable length, were too dreadful, and at times I felt as if I had none at all, while at others doubts actually assailed me as to whether I had ever possessed any. The bottom of the cart was strewn, thicker than autumnal leaves, with small boxes and parcels, and I found my knees on a level with my chin, but where my feet were stowed heaven alone knew, except occasionally when a terrific attack of pins and needles reminded me very forcibly of their actuality ; so that, in spite of the squeezing I was undergoing, my faculties were alive in inverse ratio.

I will spare you further detail, however, except to say that never in the whole course of my life have I received such a jolting. The country was flat and uninteresting, and very much intersected by rivers and ravines, and the places we passed through—Berkley East, Taungs, and Vryburg—were small and miserable, while Mafeking, which we drove into on the morning of the 7th May, was very little better, though there was more stir and bustle about it.

Colonel Sir Fred Carrington, K.C.M.G., who was here in command of the Bechuanaland Border Police, was pleased to see me, and gave me all the information he could about what was going on—little more than I had learnt in the Secretary's office at Kimberley, which was practically *nil*. Indeed, the prevailing ignorance of the country, and of things in general, is astounding !

The same evening we continued our journey, after a rest of six hours, which consisted in trying to clean ourselves, and in running about all over Mafeking, seeing various people and securing stores, and, to our dismay, we found that we were to go some hundred miles further on, over a hilly country, in a smaller cart than the one we had left Kimberley with. Our number had now been reduced to seven, and the weight of the mails was lighter by several hundred pounds, but we had not driven many miles before we found that we had jumped from the frying-pan into the fire.

Not only was the cart of lesser dimensions, but its springs were broken, and, to make matters worse, bolstered up by solid blocks of wood. Oh, our poor nerves ! How we trembled in anticipation at every stone and stump we saw in the road—and their name was legion—and when we struck, which was frequently, curses and imprecations thickened the

air. Speaking for myself, never, while memory lives, shall I forget those jars and bumps. Our teams were now composed of mules—for the horses had long since succumbed to the deadly horse sickness—and wonderfully surefooted and nimble they were, especially in the dark, while it was a marvel to all of us how on earth the drivers managed to keep to the road, such as it was, during the night.

The following afternoon we were at Kanya, which is well situated, the village being on the slope of a large hill commanding a fine and extensive view.

Here the long man unfortunately fell ill, and we were obliged to leave him, but as he was in good hands, we did not mind. Resuming our journey, we had not driven on half a mile, when a small rock proved too much for us, and over we went. Luckily no one was hurt, but the cart was damaged, so we were obliged to return to Kanya for repairs. We had to remain all night, and put up at Mr. Williams's store, who did all he could to make us thoroughly comfortable, and his charges were absurdly low. I can only say I wish all storekeepers were like him, for he made himself so civil and genial with it all, that when we left the next morning, we were genuinely sorry to say good-bye.

The long man, though not quite right, had, I am glad to say, sufficiently recovered to proceed with us, and that evening found us at Molepolole, a large town where Kaffir corn and tobacco were growing extensively. There were two stores here, but we did not go near them, as our commissariat was well supplied.

The following morning we reached Mashindi's, or Linch-wai's, an independent and somewhat troublesome Chief. Here also, is a large town, occupying a situation which is wild and picturesque in the extreme, and enclosed nearly on all sides by hills.

On again, for we never stopped more than two hours at an outspan, and the evening overtook us at Lonetree Pan, a name suggestive of poetry and pathos, and anything or everything in fact. A bare patch in the veldt, with a tree standing solitary, gnarled and knotted with the hoariness of age, in a half-dried-up-quagmire. It was an uncanny spot, far away from even a sign of humanity, but here we had to stop for two hours, to rest and graze the mules. And we drank tea brewed out of the very muddy water of the Pan, with a relish that would have amused our London Club friends.

That night was the worst we experienced, in spite of the beauty of a full moon, and of a sky almost choked with stars, the Milky Way, in particular, being strewn and studded with them. And so, I might say, was the road with boulders and stumps, broken also by ravines and undulations innumerable. Sleep all along had been out of the question, but some of us had occasionally been able to snatch five minutes' nap over a level stretch, but the bumping and jolting was simply terrible, and to add to our misery, the driver, who had been over 70 hours in harness, kept falling asleep from sheer exhaustion. But like everything else it came to an end, and the morning found us enjoying our breakfast at Miller's store, while by dusk on the same evening we arrived at Notwani Junction, on the Crocodile River.

Here we were turned into a still smaller conveyance—a kind of Scotch cart with a canvas hood to it. We were still seven, not atoms, but shreds of humanity, what was left of us. The stout man alone seemed to have retained his substantiality, but the skeleton was thinner than ever, and the long man's legs had been elongated to an extent, equal only to a stretch of very vivid and elastic imagination. As for me, I felt more like a letter-bag that had been sat upon with a vengeance, and the others resembled parcels and packages that had been flattened beyond recognition. However, get in and get on we did, but this time with bullocks instead of mules, and at a steadier, if slower, pace. The next morning, as we turned round a bend in the road, we were delighted to see, in the distance, patches of white standing out from the surrounding green, that turned out to be the tents of the Pioneers who are concentrated here. Cecil Camp, which is the name they call it, stands close to the Crocodile River. It is well chosen and nicely laid out, and the scenery about it is charming. These same Pioneers seem to be doing themselves, as they did us, with a good breakfast—well, and after a couple of hours pleasantly spent, we swung along again, forward, yet ever forward, the morning of the 13th May landing us at Pilapwie, where Messrs. Harman and Moffatt kindly put us up.

Between Mafeking and Kanya the country is thickly-wooded and pretty, while the first ten miles beyond the latter is hilly, and the scenery lovely, park-like, in fact, in many places. Water and wood were very plentiful, but except some partridges, we saw no game. Nothing but a few stray huts are to be seen from the road. The villages seem to

be built either on or underneath the hills, for protection, presumably. After passing Notwani Junction, game was more abundant, especially buck of various kinds, and at times we might have shot them from the cart.

The most characteristic feature of the country is the enormous ant-heaps that are generally thrown up round trees and bushes, sugar-loaf in shape, many of them from fifteen to twenty feet high, and several yards in circumference at the base ; while between Molepolole and Pilapwie, the number of dead trees was very noticeable—the work of the white ant, which, destructive everywhere, is in these parts unusually so.

The huts at Pilapwie were only native built, and far from luxurious, but Messrs. Harman and Moffat made up for it by their excessive kindness. I was shown into a hut, and a bath given me. Oh ! the luxury and the joy of that tub, the first since leaving Kimberley ; for water was scarce at Mafeking, and we had only been able to get a wash down ; while on the road the stoppages had been so short, and the cold so intense, that every available moment was snatched by us for food and sleep.

CHAPTER II.

PILAPWIE.

From 13th May to 14th May, 1890.

IN the afternoon, having helped Moffatt, the postmaster, to sort the mails, which, after so close an acquaintance, I felt myself part and parcel of, I sallied out to call on Chief Khama, as well as to take a look round his town.

Moffatt, who talks Mangwato fluently, accompanied me, both as guide and interpreter. He is a nice young fellow, and has been very civil and obliging to us. Born in Bechuanaland, he is the grandson of the famous missionary who died of Livingstone's, and, like the latter, looked up to by us, the Rev. J.

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No mere savage potentate, ruling over a common herd of wild barbarians, but a man of intelligence and humanity, wielding power with justice and firmness over a quiet and orderly people. A man upon whom the mantle of the great-minded Livingstone and Moffatt has fallen, enlightening and

influencing him with a result unparalleled in the mission history of the world, the moral improvement of a savage race; and whose determined opposition to the liquor traffic is perfectly sincere, reflecting great credit on his strength of will and singleness of purpose. He informed us that he was always glad to see white men, but especially Englishmen, for whom he has a sincere regard; but he was not communicative, and confined himself to commonplace remarks about things in general. Indeed, he appeared to me as very reserved, and I noticed that he was particularly reticent about our movements, though, from something he let fall casually, I inferred that he thoroughly grasped the difference between the Imperial Government and the Chartered Co.—“Rhodes’ concern”—as he called it, a name which struck me as being singularly applicable.

In fact, he was neither talkative nor inquisitive, and Moffatt afterwards told me that, among the Ba-Mangwatos, curiosity is looked upon as want of etiquette and bad form.

Leaving Khama, who, by the way, I forgot to mention dresses like a European, and uses furniture of the very plainest and simplest description, we walked through the town.

It is long and straggling, but neatly laid out in squares, each of which represents a regiment and occupies an extensive area. The present population is said to be from 15,000 to 25,000, a very broad margin, but then it must be remembered that numbers of the people keep floating backwards and forwards between the town and their cattle-posts that are in the bush. Besides, though Khama is anxious to assist civilisation in every way, he has not as yet adopted the census, doubtless a necessity, but a highly refined mode of torture all the same. The huts are round and low, and look for all the world like overgrown bee-hives, though, in our walk, the drones, mostly males, seemed to predominate over the bees, all of whom were female, and engaged chiefly in carrying water to and fro. The hives are built of reeds and bulrushes, which grow strong, tall, and in abundance along the river banks, and they are plastered with mud and clay, the roofs being thatched with the long grass that, after the rains, overruns the veldt in rank luxuriance.

Considering that it is only a year ago since the Mangwatos left Shosong, their old capital, the progress they have made is simply marvellous, but most of the credit of this, I believe, is

due to Khama, who dislikes idleness and has made them work.

Harman tells me that Khama keeps his people in splendid order, and that he is a strict disciplinarian. He has instituted "roll call," which is called twice a day—morning and evening—and if a man is late he is reprimanded, while 20 to 30 lashes well laid on is the penalty for absence. And he says it is quite a common occurrence, of a morning especially, when they have overslept themselves, to see men running as hard as they can to be in time for roll call.

Many of the regiments are completely armed with Martini-Henrys, and all of them carry flint-locks, blunderbusses, and weapons of every kind, sort, or description, old Brown Bess being apparently a hot favourite.

The old town, Shosong, I am told was abandoned on account of the scarcity of water, and the present site occupied because of its abundance, no less than three large springs rising in the hill under which the town stands, while its fertility of soil was another inducement. Khama, it seems, would have taken possession of this place years ago, but was deterred from so doing by fear of the Matabeles, who are in the habit of raiding in every direction, and of the Boers, who were inclined to be troublesome and aggressive. So that our occupation of Bechuanaland, and projected invasion of Mashonaland, has done him a good turn, and secured him entirely from attack.

Owing to this move, however, and from other causes, the people are rather hard up for food, which they are buying from the store of the Bechuanaland Trading Association. This Company, which has the sole trading monopoly in Khama's country—of which I will speak later on—was established about two years ago by two very enterprising men of the name of Johnson and Heany, who were serving at the time in the B.B.P., one as Orderly-room-, the other as Quartermaster-Sergeant; the former, now Major Johnson, commanding the Pioneers, the latter, Captain Heany, in command of a troop of that semi-civil demi-Military Force! The concern is evidently profiting by the move from Shoshong, and fattening on the misfortunes of the Mangwato, and that it is flourishing is evident from the fact that a large Jewish firm is financing it.

In one way, however, the scarcity of food produce is doing good, for Khama is encouraging his people to cultivate to

a greater extent, so that in the future they will have a supply in excess of their own requirements. In fact, it is evident his idea is to create a reserve in case of emergency, as also to have a surplus to sell to outsiders ; and, with this object in view, he is urging them all round to buy the iron ploughs, which the B.T.A. are importing largely. Surely a progressionist and a far-seeing man is this same chief.

His people are by no means a comely or a fine-limbed race, but if not good-featured, they make up for it by being peace-and-order-loving, and, on the whole, fairly industrious. They certainly treated us with great civility, and with far less of that aggressive curiosity which is so marked a feature of the cockney ; but they are most persistent beggars, and will ask for anything, the more so if you are a stranger, and they think they can impose on you, which they will naturally do, if you are weak enough to give them the chance. They do it, too, with a persistence equalled only by the pertinacity of the Egyptian fly, which, to my mind, is the most aggravating creature in existence ; and Moffatt's servant, who is looking after me, keeps on pointing out to me, at every turn, the rents in his shirt and trousers, dropping broad hints that new ones would be acceptable—hints that, needless to say, are wasted on me. Three slits on the right temple form the distinguishing marks of the Ba-Mangwato pure, but I believe I am not wrong in saying that as a race they are mixed, and far from being pure. For Pilapwie is a City of Refuge, and Khama is by no means averse to receiving fugitives from other tribes, so long as they behave themselves ; and many have come to him from the countries north of Lake Ngami, and beyond the Zambesi, and these latter can be distinguished by the removal of two of the central front teeth, which gives them a most repulsive appearance.

The women, though not actually hideous, are by no means beautiful, and they have inordinate vanity and love for colour and beads, which they wear in all shapes, sizes, and shades. Take, for instance, one woman I saw, who was aged and ugly. Yards of large green beads were glittering round her skinny neck, bracelets of chain-brass and coils of brass wire encased her legs, jingling like clashing cymbals, as she waddled about. Round her waist was a belt of small blue beads, and armlets of a bright yellow variety covered her arms, from the shoulders down to the elbow-joints, while to complete the toilet were anklets, strung together, of beads in variegated hues. The

general effect was very striking ; while the contrast between the decay of nature pure and simple on one side, and the advance of civilised humanity with its cheap tawdriness on the other, was striking enough to point a moral—*Vanity Fair*, even in the midst of Afric's dusky wilds !

Surely a biting sarcasm on our boasted civilisation, and suggesting the idea that Solomon, when he moralised on the vanity and vexatious spirit of the world, was criticising the Queen of Sheba, whose kingdom, the land of Ophir, is generally supposed to be the country that we are now about to occupy.

Both sexes dress in and ape European fashions as nearly as possible, and in accordance with their means, and it is very amusing to see with what an air of dignity and assumption they will wear rags and tatters that have been thrown away. Not thrown away on them, however, for they patch them up and make the most of them.

In fact patches, not on the face, as our genial ancestors wore them, but on their clothes, even brand new ones, is the latest fashion in Pilapwie, and, as I write, a man stands before me wearing a pair of trousers with two stripes of yellowish brown right down to the knee, and a broad patch of a greenish cord behind ; the original garment, of which there is but little left, is a dark tweed, a highly-respectable, Sunday go-to-meeting pair. For Khama's people are Christians, sing hymns in chorus rather well, and go to church regularly on the Sabbath, the Rev. T. Hepburn being their spiritual guide, at the same time that he is Khama's private secretary and counsellor.

Feathers worn in the hat is another Mangwato fashion, and it is not uncommon to see an ebony figure, nude except for a waistcloth, wearing a huge felt wideawake, surmounted by a tall waving bunch of feathers, stalking along with any amount of swagger, and with a look of gravity that adds to the comicality of the situation—a mingling of the sublime and the ridiculous. It is really too ludicrous for words. So you see that Paris and London are not the only capitals that can set the fashion, and that society in the Mangwato metropolis, with its many coloured beads, its patches and its plumes, is as happy in its own cheap conceits as European society in its velvet and diamonds. I do not know of any thing the Mangwatos make or manufacture, except pots and pans of a coarse earthenware; curing sheepskins or occasionally those of wild animals, the silver jackal and leopard being about the

handsomest, which they sew together and make into karosses ; and turning whips or shamboks out of hippo and giraffe hides, the handles of which they bind very neatly with thin brass wire.

Their principal occupation seems to consist in raising crops of mealies, Kaffir corn, pumpkins sufficient for their own wants, and a little tobacco ; breeding large herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, the flesh of which they very seldom, if ever, eat, but the milk of which they usually drink. It is not an easy thing by any means to buy milk from them, as the young animals are allowed to drink a great deal, and, when they do sell, they will not part with an ordinary quart bottle for less than a shilling. Poultry they do not seem to cultivate to any extent, and what they have are miserable specimens, while an egg is quite a rarity.

Having seen all that was to be seen, and found out what was worth knowing of the people, my next object was to get a conveyance to take us on. The post-cart service ceases at Pilapwie, the mails being carried on in a small Scotch cart belonging to the B. B. P., passengers as best they can. There was only room for one in this uncovered vehicle, and as the stout man declared that he was in a violent hurry, long man and I elected to come on in a waggon. Mr. Harman kindly promised to raise one from Khama, and after some shilly-shallying on the part of the natives, he managed to procure an empty waggon for us. So, thanking Harman and Moffatt most cordially for all their kindness, we started at 11 on the morning of the 14th with a team of seven span of oxen ; and, on comparing notes, long-man and I found that we had arrived at the same conclusion, namely, that they were evident descendants of Pharaoh's lean kine !

CHAPTER III.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 15th May to 18th May, 1890.

AND now began my first experience of trekking in South Africa. Though I have travelled in an ox-waggon in India, yet how different: old sensations, but under fresh conditions, and altogether new surroundings. There I had been in a civilised country, more or less, here I was absolutely in the wilds. Nature, beautiful and bright above and around us, silence almost supreme, disturbed occasionally by the twittering of a stray bird or two, or broken every now and then, as we yekked along, by the loud crack of the driver's whip, and the extraordinary gibberish hurled by him at the meek-eyed oxen.

I will not worry you with the detail of each day's events, but I must try to describe one little sylvan glade in which we outspanned for breakfast.

Fancy yourself in a vast natural amphitheatre, the tiers of which are high, wooded hills, clothed in a verdure of varied tints, the arena a large, open, grassy glade, with a tiny stream trickling across it. A more bewitching spot to camp in you cannot easily imagine. Eye cannot picture a place so fair, and to us it is a little world of our own, for we are, literally speaking, in a wilderness, with a beauty that ravishes, and a solitude that charms. A beauty and a solitude that would inspire even the veriest slave with the gloriously delightful feeling of liberty, were it not that conscience reminds us that none are free, and all are slaves to Circumstance and Condition.

A bright but not cloudless sky, genial sun, a cool and grateful zephyr, our oxen revelling in the grass, the black drivers seated round a roaring fire (the first thing made at an outspan), roasting the inevitable coffee, and grilling, on the embers, a brace of bush partridge, shot by long-man, for our breakfast; a soft-eyed Mangwato maiden, whom the driver

has given a lift, sitting, tailor-like, a little distance apart from the men, is singing in her own language, in a low and plaintive but sweet voice, "Rock of Ages." As she sings, a visitor from some neighbouring cattle-post, that lies hidden away in a recess of the dense forest through which we are travelling, turns up suddenly, and sits down by the fire, joining in the chatter that has commenced, just as if he was one of the party; for this is more than Liberty Hall, it is a free country, and all are guests and come uninvited. The stranger has an old sheepskin thrown over his shoulder, held together by buttons that had, once upon a time, graced the smart tunic of the 16th Lancers, while in his hand he grasps a decent-looking rifle, which bears upon the barrel, "E. C. Green, 87, High Street, Cheltenham." Oh, this great world of ours, impeded by watery and sandy wastes, mountain chains, and last, but not least of all, by barbaric ignorance, how little and narrow it is after all! Gentle doves are cooing softly, green parrots, and a species of toucan, are screeching, while various other birds are mingling in the pleasant hum, and as far as we can see, all is beautiful, while only a short stroll from the camp the stillness of peace prevails.

It was a curious scene, motley yet picturesque, out of which an artist would have made a most effective picture, and ever so much more expressive than any poor words of mine.

On the 16th we arrived at a place called Elebe, which for a year has been the abode of the B.B.P., who have only recently moved on to Macloutsie. Their huts are still standing; but how anyone in his seven senses could have selected such a God-forsaken place for a standing camp is beyond me. Pemberton is still here, and Goddy, who is a doctor belonging to the Chartered Co., is with him, as several of the men are down with fever. The place is simply a fever den, and deadly for horses as well. The water is brackish—another reason why it was chosen, I suppose. Pemberton and Goddy were both very pleased to see us, and gave us the best they had, after which we were once more on the trek.

In spite of the dust and flies, which were truly terrible, the one blinding and choking, the other aggravating to a degree, to say nothing of the jolting, creaking, and other minor unpleasantnesses, I, for my part, have enjoyed my first trip in a South African waggon. Though our total ignorance of the language was at times very annoying, as it placed us entirely in the hands of our black friends, neither long-man nor myself

in any way interfered with the working of the oxen or the hours of trekking, and I was very pleased to find he agreed with me on this point, as we should have fared badly, instead of being landed at Macloutsie in very good time ; and I must say for Khama's men that they behaved well, and were very civil to us on the whole.

Neither of us was sorry to end his journey for the time being. It was on a Sunday evening, just as the sun was sinking behind the distant blue-grey hills in a halo of golden glory, that some poor fellow, who had just completed life's endless struggle, was being laid to his last earthly rest. Above the shouts and whip-cracks of the driver, we heard the shrill bugles sounding the point of war, and the sharp rattle of musketry being fired over the grave. Not a lively omen at the best of times ; but then I am in no way superstitious, though hailing from the Emerald Isle, and familiarity breeds contempt, while stale custom makes humanity callous.

As camps go, the one at Macloutsie occupies an excellent site, though, from a tactical standpoint, it could be improved upon, a ridge of high ground about a mile to the east being an infinitely stronger position. The B.B.P. are to the left of the road, the B.S.A.C.P. beyond and to the right. Both camps face the Lippekole hills, some fifteen miles distant, in a northerly direction. Good water is obtainable in abundance, about half a mile off, from the bed of the Matlaputla and another small stream. The veldt is covered with thick bush, and firewood has only to be gathered and brought in. Game is very plentiful ; but, of course, the larger animals have been driven away to some little distance by our presence and activity. Pheasants, partridges, and guinea-fowl are to be shot within a few yards of the tents, but are naturally growing a bit shy, as so many fellows have been potting at them. In the waters of the Macloutsie River, the nearest point of which is three miles away, and in some of the smaller streams that are nearer, barbel up to a good size, and a silvery kind of fish, not unlike a perch, are to be angled for in the larger and deeper pools, and very fair eating they are too. Add to all these strong points a fine view, and you have all the reasons that must have decided its choice.

The B.B.P. have three troops here under Major Raleigh Grey (a captain in the Inniskilling Dragoons), and the B.S.A.C.P. five troops under Lieut.-Colonel Pennefather of the same regiment.

A fort capable of holding 200 men, planned by Mac Adam of the B.B.P., has been built by the men of both corps, between the two camps. Against artillery, or effective rifle fire, such as the Boers, it would be useless, as it is commanded from the north and east by higher ground, but it is strong enough to keep out a rush of natives. Its greatest defect, however, is want of water; the nearest point at which it is obtainable, being about half a mile away.

The physique of both corps is splendid, except that for mounted infantry purposes; the men are too big and too heavy, while the horses, or ponies rather, are too small to carry them. Such a mixed lot I never saw in my life, all sorts and conditions, from the aristocrat down to the street arab-peers and waifs of humanity mingling together like the ingredients in a hotch-potch. Prospectors predominate, but nearly every trade and profession under the sun is represented. Clerks and business men of all kinds jostle one another, and one troop is called the gentlemanly troop, because the majority in it are brokers, though some of the men say they are more broke than broker; and, after all, what is there more gentlemanly about a broker than any one else, they ask? One chubbily-faced, curly-headed youth whom I have in my troop calls himself a mathematical professor, and another long-haired individual a professor of the art tonsorial. They are a very good lot on the whole, but naturally a bit off-hand and loose, so I have christened them the "Casual Corps."

Many of the non-commissioned officers are ex-soldiers, two of them troop sergeant-majors, belonged to the Inniskilling Dragoons, and one to the Life Guards. Some of them are Militia officers, one of them, Dobson, in D troop, a captain in our 3rd Battalion, and Chinnery, who is a sergeant in my troop, holds a company in one of the Scotch Battalions. They are inclined to be rather independent and gentlemen at large, but taking them all round, they are a smart set, and as keen as mustard. But this, I may say, applies to everybody.

The officers, socially speaking, are not a bad lot, but there is no *esprit de corps* among them. Hardly to be expected, I suppose, in a newly-raised corps, that may be disbanded within a year or two, but, professionally, the less said about them the better. The colonel is the only one who has seen any active service, the Zulu War being his one experience; and Willoughby, who is our staff-officer, although he wears the Egyptian medal, has never been under fire.

Uniformity in our kits can hardly be said to exist; head-gear, equipment, and the colour of our uniforms varying much, but Willoughby's turn-out is too funny for words. A gaudy red field cap, a khaki jacket, a pair of baggy blue trousers, with broad red stripes, and brown leather button boots, while his seat on a horse is ugly in the extreme. I wonder what the Blues, to which corps he belongs, would think of him if they saw him? So far, the only distinguishing features I have discovered are, in the commandant a furious temper, and in the staff officer a craze for cigarettes.

Of the many incongruities with which we bristle, my troop, or, rather, the officers of it, drawn up for inspection, is the funniest, and similar to what one might see on the stage of melodrama!

I am only of medium height. On my right is my junior sub. Mundell, over six feet four, and turned out spick-and-span in neat cords and butcher boots. To my left stands Bruce, a squat five-foot-nothing, in baggy clothes, and badly-rolled patties, looking as fierce and as truculent as any stage villain I ever set eyes on, and a typical swashbuckler to boot. While Mundell is an ex-Life Guardsman, and looks it, Bruce, it is evident, is an old man of the sea, who has taken to soldiering rather late in life. So with an eye to effect, you can easily imagine the comicality of the situation, and the *tout ensemble* we present. We are not, however, singular in this respect. B troop, marching past with Slade at its head, is a sight not to be forgotten in a hurry; and he also might be mistaken for a jovial mariner, but as he tries to qualify as Buffoon-in-Chief to the Force, it may be that his rolling gait is only assumed for the occasion. Last, but not least, A troop rejoices in a sprig of nobility, whose chief beauty lies in his medal ribbons, and in the length and curliness of his dark locks, over which he expends all the superabundant energy and elbow grease that he is master of.

To tell you of our work would be sheer waste of time and paper, and the only entry in my diary with reference to the drill, is the "usual drivel!"

Don't, however, run away with the idea that because we are a "Casual Corps," who pass our days in drivel, we are to be despised or looked down upon. Better material I have never seen. The *morale* is excellent, and all ranks grit to the backbone, and if well handled will be hard to beat—men,

mostly of exceptional experience and intelligence, who, if ever they are placed in positions dependent on individual resource, are certain to give a good account of themselves.

The orders that fly about the camp at times might well be classified under the separate headings of "confusing," "contradictory," and "curious," or, speaking generally, as "amusing." Whether the mighty brain of the colonel or staff officer is responsible for such emanations, I cannot say. Probably a combination of the two, which accounts for their variety. To give you a sample, Dunne, our transport officer, received one to-day from Willoughby to wash 280 coal sacks for the purpose of conversion into sand bags. They were not to be beaten or shaken in case they might fall to pieces!

General Methuen, whom we have been expecting for some time past, as we are unable to move until he has pronounced us efficient, has turned up at last, and appears to be a man of charming personality. He first of all inspected us by troops, then two troops at a time in outpost duty, which was exceedingly well done by E and D troops, the men moving steadily and everything going off quietly owing to the absence of the C.O. Field firing, and a big field day with blank ammunition, the B.B.P. defending the east face of the camp, and ourselves taking the offensive, has ended the inspection, and the general expressed himself as satisfied with our efficiency to move forward.

A handsome man to look at General Methuen is, as nice as he is fine. A soldier and a gentleman every inch of him, he is a good officer, who knows his work well, and is in thorough earnest about it. Always quiet and courteous, he goes to work in a systematic, business-like manner, and it is a real pleasure to work under him. A leader for whom one would sacrifice anything, and such a contrast to Pennefather, who is noisy, discourteous, and loses the little head he has on every possible occasion, and when he has lost it, it takes him all his time to find it again.

CHAPTER IV.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 19th May to 26th June, 1890.

SO far, although the varied types of humanity I have met with have been a study instructive yet amusing from its very novelty, there are none who have interested me so much as Mother Patrick, Doctor Rand, and Father Prestige.

Mother Patrick is at the head of half a dozen Catholic Sisters, who have volunteered to come as nurses with the force that is about to occupy Mashonaland.

Leaving the comparative comfort of their convent at Grahamstown, the luxury I might well say, by comparison with the hardships confronting them, they have braved a journey, the difficulties of which can be easily measured, from the description I have given you ; this, however, is but the beginning of the drama. Before them lie hundreds of miles of unknown country, much of it covered by dense bush, intersected by treacherous rivers, teeming with fierce wild animals of every kind, and swarming, for all we know, with the still more ferocious and blood-thirsty Matabele, thirsting to dip their spears in the blood of the white invaders who, as they consider, are encroaching on their own preserves. But deadlier even than animal or savage is the insidious fever of the low veldt, that has already accounted for the lives of many poor fellows, who have bravely and cheerfully faced every peril without flinching ! And all for what ? The hope of better things to come, and which, for them at all events, never came. Well may England thank her stars that she has got such men and women ; for they have made her what she is, and as long as she can keep on producing them, she need never fear the consequences, or think even of degeneracy.

But nothing has daunted the Sisters, who think of nothing beyond their duty, and who perform it, not as if it were a duty, but a religion that secures them happiness and pleasure

only. Going about it as they do so quietly and with a manner so unassuming, as if they are doing nothing out of the way ; they do the work of menials, washing and cooking and not allowing the natives to do anything but fetch and carry. And yet they are always so thoughtful and so kind, all smiles and sunshine, and it is no wonder the men in hospital worship them as ministering and merciful angels. An adoration that has assumed a very practical shape in the presentation of a purse of money from each troop in both forces, many of the troopers, whose pay is only 2s. a day, subscribing a guinea or two apiece. Needless to say that this money all goes to the Church, and not to themselves, and when we consider that all this sacrifice is given simply for love and from the heart, we can realise the devotion that prompts it, and form some estimate of what the Sisters are like.

I am glad of this opportunity of saying something for them, but recollect that no words of mine and no estimate can adequately express the good they are doing.

Mother Patrick is a young Irishwoman, with a pretty brogue, and a face that, in spite of the hideous uniform she wears, and the bonnet which almost conceals and does its best to depreciate it, is sweet beyond measure—sweet not with the beauty of the flower that fades, but with the beauty of a pure and noble expression that is immortal, though tinged at times with a shade of sadness, arising no doubt from the vanities and vexations that seethe around her, and accentuated by the moral woes of suffering humanity, which she can alleviate but not heal.

But apart from her work, there is one topic that, if not dearer to her than duty, lies quite as near to her heart, and that is Erin, home, and beauty ; and when, over an afternoon cup of tea, that from her hand makes the tinned milk taste as if fresh from the cow, Mother Patrick is induced to talk, you discover that the quiet and unobtrusive little woman is an inveterate Home Ruler, but not of the kind that in England is spoken of with contempt, and looked upon with horror !

Ah, how little does the reserved and unbending Englishman grasp the characteristics of the faulty, but warm-hearted, Hibernian, in spite of centuries of experience and legislation ! Blind in their own conceit, and impervious to their own faults, they have never understood us, and never will, so long as they will not take us as they find us, but judge us as they do themselves by their own stiff standard of formality. From

the individual point of view of poet and moralist, it would, no doubt, be an excellent thing if we could see ourselves as others see us ; but a national and political standpoint alters the question, and it is impossible to gauge the warm and impulsive temperament of one nation by the cold and calculating nature of another ; and this is precisely what England has done from the very beginning.

Mother Patrick loves her country, as all true Hibernians do, with a love that Englishmen sneer at, because they cannot understand it—a love that is sacred, and a religion in itself, that lives in every throb of an Irish heart, and every beat of an Irish pulse ; yet a love that, I regret to say, is fostered by the extreme difference in the nature of the two races, and intensified by the antagonism of opposing religions.

Being a countryman of hers, although not holding quite the same views, Mother Patrick opens her mind freely to me when she has the leisure, and gives me pictures of the distressful ould country so sad and so pathetic, that she is fast converting me to her opinions. She cannot, however, win from me the intense political admiration I have for Parnell as Ireland's loyal and consistent champion ; and, looking on him through the short-sighted eyes of religion, she sees in him a lost and perjured soul.

I have the greatest respect for religion ; all the same, I cannot help feeling that it is responsible for much evil, and that it would be all the better for a little more breadth and universality of spirit. Yes, religion has much to answer for, as Charles Stewart Parnell found to his cost when, on the shallow pretext of morality, it sacrificed and repudiated him, to cover its own narrow motives beneath the transparent veil of double-faced politics.

With his party divided and sub-divided, uncrowned King no longer, the work of a lifetime in ruins, and the settlement of a question so dear to Irishmen further off than ever, how, indeed, are the mighty fallen !—and all because of one mistake, unfortunately for him against morality, the password of English society.

Still, we find much in common, and Mother Patrick's vivid descriptions of life in the south of Ireland—outcome, partly, of their own want of thrift, but quite as much of political misconception—cannot fail to convince even the stoniest-hearted of sceptics. Doctor Rand, who is senior medical officer of the B.S.A.C.P., is in charge of the hospital, and the Sisters,

of course, work under his directions. I have met scores of medical men in my time, but never one so completely wrapped up, so entirely devoted to his profession, while his knowledge and ability are unquestionable. Looking on it as the noblest of professions, he devotes all his time and attention to it, not because he lives by it, but because he loves it, and on account of his humanity, which, humane to a degree, likes to apply all the force of his intellect in succouring others who are helpless. And his devotion is so great that it amounts to positive slavery.

Earnest and studious as you can well imagine such a man would be, he has plenty to say for himself, and possesses a fund of dry humour that is positively refreshing, for the usual conversation here is very common-place, and as full of platitudes as a red-herring is of roe: a man whose earnestness of purpose even an enemy could not but appreciate, and whose deep sincerity is such a striking contrast to the shallow superficiality around us, that it is not surprising I find in him a companionship not of pleasure only, but of wholesome instruction as well.

Very liberal in his opinions, but with a strong leaning towards radicalism, and in spite of his calm exterior and quiet demeanour, a man of sterling character and of strong passions, who, if the occasion demanded it, or the emergency arose, might possibly develop into a red hot firebrand.

Father Prestige, on the other hand, though very interesting, is not so like Mother Patrick and Dr. Rand, because of his own personality, but from the knowledge that is inseparable from himself. But it is a knowledge in no way derived from ability, and has nothing original or novel about it. Simply the dry facts of sheer experience, extremely valuable in itself, but imparted, as the Reverend Father is wont to, in the barren language of bare reality, devoid of colouring or metaphor, and lengthened to the utmost as he is inclined to do, it is apt to become monotonous.

Still, in the face of the impending expedition to Mount Hampden, and the attitude that will be adopted by the Matabele, at present an open question, his views, derived from an experience of six years lived amongst them, and a knowledge of their language, which he talks fluently, is worth listening to.

While acknowledging that the Jesuit mission to which he belonged was a failure--although conducted on the sound

and practical principles of gradually educating them up to the high level of religion step by step, socially, then morally—he maintains that once the lower or working class, who are now ground down by the military despotism of the dominant race, obtain their freedom, the scheme will be feasible. As to the present intention of the Matabele, he speaks to the point, and with authority, that he cannot bring himself to believe that a nation with such bloody and fighting instincts, trained as they have been from childhood to live by the spear and wallow in blood, will allow a hostile movement to take place on their flank, and a country on their borders, which pays tribute to them, to be occupied by us without an attempt to prevent it. That merely the word of Lobengula, which is certainly all-powerful, will restrain them, or the young but increasing instinct of commerce that is growing up among them will so quickly change the fierce nature of the warriors of the young regiments, is, he thinks, out of the question. But even if they do allow us to occupy Mashonaland peaceably, there is bound to be a row eventually. And he is right.

But there is also another way of looking at it. That when the occupation of Mashonaland is an accomplished fact, we can possibly allow a blood-thirsty nation, of whose conduct we are uncertain, to remain on our flank, with our line of communication to the Cape open to attack, would assuredly be a paradox. There are seemingly only two ways open to solve the problem! Either give Lobengula and his savages the option to clear across the Zambesi at once, or smash them up. The latter for choice, as the simplest way out of the difficulty, and to avoid future complications, which must come, let philanthropists reason as they like. It is worth the risk, too, for Matabeleland is rich and fertile, and worth opening up; and let philanthropy weigh well the fact, that the middle and lower classes would hail the advent of a good government with one accord, so Father Prestige, who knows them, informs me.

A very different type of man is Canon Balfour, who accompanies the force as Protestant Chaplain. Refined, well cultured, and high-minded, he is a man of an exceedingly amiable disposition, very pleasant to talk to. But though his heart is in the right place, I do not consider him the stamp of man suited to a rough-and-tumble such as this is, for he is too sensitive and retiring, and lacks coarseness, which

is the chief essential, and whenever I see him, those lines of Cowper always recur to me :—

“A kick that scarce would move a horse
Will kill a sound Divine.”

He is a man, however, whatever one's convictions, whom it is impossible not to respect, for he is thoroughly in earnest, yet always genial and pleasant.

The Pioneers are now concentrated at Grobelaars Drift, about twenty-five miles to the east of us, and several of them have ridden in here. Among them Johnson, Heany, and Selous.

The former is short and stout with a jovial face and manner, full of push and energy, but he does not give me the impression of being either clever or deep, though he is credited with planning and arranging the pioneer expedition, and getting £80,000 down from Rhodes for its outfit and equipment. 'Cute enough he may be, though I have an idea his friend and coadjutor Heany is 'cuter still, but having the more aggressive nature and greater bounce of the two, he takes the lead upon himself, and poses as such.

Selous is going up as guide and road-maker, for he has been in these parts before, and as there is not even a track, one will have to be cut the whole way up to Mount Hampden. He is a slight man of 5 ft. 9 in., hard, wiry-looking, with resolution stamped in every line of his face when animated ; but when in repose he is so very quiet and unassuming that his personality is apt to be misleading to some, though it impresses me all the more, for under that calm exterior lives a sound head and a brave heart. A mighty hunter, but a modest man, and one of few words apparently, in striking and refreshing contrast to the General Bounces and Private Braggarts, who abound and talk very, very big indeed.

Colquhoun, who is to be administrator of Mashonaland, and Jameson, one of Rhodes' bosom friends, are also now in camp, but I have not seen much of them.

As far as I can see, the former is clever, but weak, and the latter, cautious and level-headed. They are both exceedingly pleasant, and Jameson seems to have plenty of humour, but I will say no more until I get to know them better !

Gifford also arrived here by post-cart from Pilapwie. He is a brother of Lord Gifford, who is a director of the B.S.A. Co., as well as of the B.T.A., and he has just come out from England, as

manager, or superintendent, of the latter. It is to be hoped that he will infuse some life and common sense into the concern, though he does not look like, or strike me as being, a man of business or capacity—but we shall see!

What we want established here, and no mistake, is a post-office, a bank, and a telegraph-office, and, as water is plentiful, and the soil good, the Company should as well start market-gardening. The trading monopoly of the B.T.A. should also be abolished. Many stores would be set up, and a little healthy rivalry encouraged which would benefit customers, who are at present entirely at the mercy of the B.T.A.—a one-horsed contrivance, who seem to keep goods that are utterly useless up here, while bare necessities, *i.e.* candles, soap, matches, etc.—most useful articles in this howling wilderness—are not obtainable. It is, in fact, a shareholders' store, and the officials say certain things must be retained for sale, and they are retained. No one buys them, for they are not wanted, but that's no matter! "Leave 'em alone if you don't want 'em." That is a bad principle for a trading company, and one of the evil effects of monopoly! The want of cash, too, is a serious matter, and a great nuisance! A man goes to this store! He only requires a few shillings' worth! He gives a cheque! The Company have no change, and either give a coupon or cheque in return for the balance, or else refuse to supply the goods. So the man is either forced to go without or buy a great deal more than he requires. This should be put a stop to by abolition of monopoly, and introduction of silver. John Byrom's epigram on "Two Monopolists," written some time in the beginning of the eighteenth century, is most applicable here:—

"Bone and Skin, two millers thin, would starve us all, or near it,
But be it known to Skin and Bone, that Flesh and Blood can't bear it."

To illustrate the rapidity and the exorbitant profits at which sales are effected, 80,000 cigarettes, Virginia Bright's, were sold in less than an hour and a-half, realising over £300, *i.e.* from £3 15s. to £4 a thousand; and more striking still, some of these were retailed, by those who were lucky enough to secure them in the first instance at about 8s. a hundred, at 2s. 6d. per packet of 10, and I know that later on, when the supplies were running short, one single cigarette fetched the enormous price of a shilling.

This very association are pursuing a most cut-throat policy

as regards themselves. I have already alluded to their short-sightedness in not keeping a sufficient supply of cash so as to keep up a constant and regular traffic with our men and the B.B.P., including officers and the various messes. Fatal and idiotic ! Their manager must be an arrant fool. Apropos of the cash, I am well informed that it is not that they have *no cash*, but that they purposely refuse our men and keep the cash for the natives. There are not very many of the latter about here, 300 at the most, while, for the last two months or more, we had over 800 white men ! At 2s. per diem, the lowest computation, per man—that is almost below the average expenditure of the men—you get £80 daily, and quite another £10 between our two officers' and two sergeants' messes—total £90 a day, or £2700 a month ! Not to be despised ! And yet all along they have done their best to stifle and choke this absolutely certain income. The association must be in a very flourishing condition, and yet I hear rumours to the contrary. It is quite time now to sweep away monopoly, and encourage free trade and competition. Besides, the B.B.P. are stationary here, so that £40 a day would remain even after we left.

CHAPTER V.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 27th June to 21st July, 1890.

AT last we have made a move, A Troop, under Heyman, having left for Tuli on the 27th June, not to get very far, however; for in the evening he rode in to say that his waggons had stuck in the Macloutsie drift, and that the oxen wouldn't pull a yard. A bad start, but Heyman is a good officer, with plenty of experience in South Africa, having served in the Cape Mounted Rifles for ten or twelve years, in which corps he saw some active service. So he is the right man in the right place. With the assistance of an extra team he got on the next day, however, and ought to be in Tuli by now, where he will meet the Pioneers, and remain until B and C Troops join him. In the meantime his troop will build a fort to command the drift over the Tuli River, which will serve as an advanced base.

Radi Kladi, one of Khama's brothers, has come in from Pilapwie with 240 men, who are to accompany the expedition as scouts. Some of them are mounted, but most of them are on foot, and all armed with rifles. Radi Kladi is a fine-looking man, tall, powerful, and well built, with good features, and, what is most noticeable, clean, well-kept hands.

In contrast to him are a couple of poor, abject-looking creatures, said to be Matabele envoys from Lobengula; but Dunne, who has been in their country, says they are only a pair of slaves, and mere messengers. They certainly look like it, and are wretched specimens of humanity, who seem to have the fear of death ever present before them. What message they have brought has not transpired, but that it refers to our movements appears tolerably certain.

B Troop, under Forbes, who is a hard-working, painstaking soldier, and C, under Keith-Falconer, marched on the afternoon of the 6th July, and my own, E, and D Troop alone

remain, the latter going on to garrison Tuli in a week or two.

The weather, until very recently, has been simply perfect—cool days and cold nights, with slight frosts in the morning. But now dust-storms are becoming frequent, and every day a strong wind from the east has been blowing cold and dust-laden, and I am really beginning to think that, at this rate, life in an old bell tent, all tattered and torn, is hardly worth living. To call it life is gross libel, and even mere existence is flattery under the guise of sarcasm! I cannot say how disappointed I am at being left behind, for my sole idea in coming out was to be one of the first to see the ancient El Dorado under a new name. Not that I expect to find the trees covered with clusters of golden fruit, or the veldt strewn with nuggets, as some of the sanguinely imaginative evidently do; but I like to be in everything that is going on, and I love action and excitement as much as I hate inaction and monotony.

Doyle and Harrison have arrived from Pilapwie. Doyle the Ubiquitous I call him, for he is everywhere—here one day, somewhere else the next, and God knows where the day after! He is never at rest, and deserves well of the Company, for within the last six weeks alone he has been from here to Cape Town and back, and, on the day of his return, to Tuli to see Pennefather. Back again three days after, and, in less than three hours, on the road to Tati, *en route* to Buluwayo. On his arrival at Tati, however, hearing that Lobengula was in a rage with him because Doyle had, as he thought, deceived him, he turned back, drove to Pilapwie, and then came on here.

He is a tall, heavy man, who has had a lot of knocking about in South Africa, and is most interesting to talk to. He is an excellent native linguist, and, amongst other languages, speaks Zulu and Matabele well. Not only can he converse, but his knowledge of their customs and habits is very extensive, and he has represented the Company at Buluwayo more than once; indeed, so far as I have seen, he is about the most useful man they have, and his services to them have been almost invaluable.

A frame of iron and a splendid constitution doubtless account for an excellent temper. Seldom ruffled, he is always cheery and genial, and, as his name implies, he is of Irish descent, though Colonial born.

Harrison, who has evidently been a club-lounger, seems a nice fellow, and as full of conversation as a bee that has dined off a rose is of honey. He is going up as secretary to Colquhoun, and though this is apparently his first experience of roughing, he buckles to it in the same spirit that Wellington's dandies did, when there was any hard fighting in prospect.

Doyle is doubtful as to the intention of the Matabele, and will not commit himself to any definite opinion; but from what he says of Loben's envoys, who are now on their way to Cape Town to see Sir Henry Loch, I infer that the expedition will reach Mount Hampden without firing a shot. One of the envoys is, I think, Babian, who went to England last year with Maund, and was presented to the Queen!

It is extremely refreshing, and quite a relief to the dry-as-dust monotony of this place, to note the delicacy of our foreign diplomacy, and the pious horror we affect at the elasticity of foreign policy. But what of the paragraph that appeared in the *Times* of the 14th?

"The Minister (Portuguese) went on to say that immediately he learnt that a British expedition had been sent to Mashonaland, he requested the Minister for Foreign Affairs to ask the British Government for explanations. The latter replied that no expedition had been sent, neither had one been organised with this object."

While another journal says "that the British Government, in reply to the Portuguese Ambassador, stated that they knew of no expedition to Mashonaland whatsoever."

To us who are taking part in the performance it seems very amusing, and at the very moment that I write, we are engaged in hoodwinking a pair of savages whom we have induced Lobengula, by means of soft, suave persuasion, to send south, virtually as envoys, in reality as hostages, to enable this very expedition, of which the Imperial Government know "nothing," to go north and occupy Mashonaland. Evidently the ways of diplomacy are beyond the ken of an average intellect!

So you see that it is impossible for me to decide as to the probability or not of fighting. Some say one thing, some another. Even the few who have been up in these parts, and who ought to know from their knowledge of the people and country, are at variance. My own impression is that we shall effect our object, but that later on, when the settlers are scattered all over the country prospecting, the Matabele will

seize the opportunity, swoop down upon them, and massacre them in detail.

But the fact is that no one really knows what will happen. The Matabele, like most savages, are uncommonly wily and cunning, and can conceal their real intentions under the plausible garb of friendship. This is what we have most to fear. *Moral.* — When the astute savage is exceptionally friendly, have a care, and beware, for he is fooling you; at least, such is the recognised opinion of those who have had considerable experience in dealing with them.

News has just reached us from Tuli, that A and B troops and the Pioneers crossed the Shashi, or Tuli River, on the 12th, and were marching forward, C troop to follow under Willoughby, who is still here, in a few days.

We have had a few arrivals in camp—Beaumont, Condon, and Mc Kay—who have got special permission to follow the column as prospectors, all three nice, sociable fellows, the two latter singing an excellent song, Mc Kay being also quite an adept at the banjo. We gave them a good opportunity as our guests of entertaining us at a dinner, that we invited the B.B.P. to, at which twenty-six of us sat down at improvised tables, with empty whisky cases as chairs, and bottles with the necks off as tumblers, out of which we drank champagne, creamy, sparkling, and foaming, as it never creamed, sparkled, and foamed out of the finest ware of Venice. Hunter, our cook, one of my troopers, a rare old scamp, but all right when he cannot get any liquor, provided us with an excellent feast, mostly made from tinned delicacies, however, and lit up by a dozen candles, stuck into empty gin bottles.

But Condon, McKay, and Beaumont, who infused a little novelty and freshness into the dull grind of our daily existence, have moved on, and, owing to reaction, we were on the point of relapsing into a state of lethargy seven times worse, when a man called Grant appeared on the scene.

Who he was or is I cannot say, but it is evident that he has a screw loose, though I cannot agree with those who call him a lunatic. He has, however, been the lion of Macloutsie for the week, and his escapades have formed the general topic of our conversation. He has certainly given us much amusement, woke us up into life in fact, though I rather fancy that he has been a source of much anxiety to Grey and Willoughby, especially the latter! It seems he appeared at Tuli, and insisted on enlisting in the Pioneers, but Johnson rejected

and sent him back here under escort to get rid of him ! At first he was brought before Willoughby, to whom he refused point-blank to give any information concerning himself or his movements, and when Willoughby, in his blandest and politest of manners, tried to insist on his doing so, Grant, with a grim smile, retorted, "You call yourself a Blue, I call you a horse marine."

This was too much for our gallant staff officer—a regular poser, in fact—who promptly closed the enquiry, and passed the prisoner on to the B.B.P., with a report of his insolence. Grey was immensely tickled at Willoughby's expense, and seemed to regard the affair in the light of a joke, but he changed his tune altogether when confronted with Grant the next morning. So exasperated did Grant make him in an interview of ten minutes, that he told his sergeant-major to "turn that man out of the orderly-room at once." But before the sergeant-major had moved a step, the prisoner replied, "That man indeed ! Who are you talking to ? Mr. Grant, if you please !"

Grey. "I'll turn you out of camp, if you're not careful."

Grant. "Turn me out of camp ! It's no use ; I'll only come back again. I'm master of this situation. And as for Willoughby, Willoughby, I'll do for that fellow they call Willoughby."

Removed from the orderly-room, he was placed in the guard-tent at the fort. Two days passed, and we had nearly forgotten his existence, when, about four a.m. on the third morning, I was awakened by Willoughby shouting in a very pathetic voice, "Guard, turn out, and stand to my tent." To jump out of bed, put on a coat, and rush out, was the work of a few seconds, and I found Willoughby, fully dressed, in a state of great excitement, surrounded by several men, giving them orders to secure Grant. It appears that the worthy Grant had broken out of the guard-tent, entered Willoughby's tent, and lit a candle. This awoke Willoughby to the ugly fact that Grant was standing over him with a loaded revolver, which, to add insult to injury, belonged to himself. The next intimation he received was an order to get up and dress. While he was doing so, Grant, who evidently has a vein of grim humour in him, amused himself cocking and recocking the revolver, varying the monotony of this by occasionally pointing it at him. Seeing a splendid shikar knife on the table, he took it up and put it in his

pocket, remarking, "This will be of some use to us, and," continuing, "you had better bring all your money with you, as we shall want it." Willoughby replying he hadn't any, he next turned his attention to the sword which was hanging on the tent pole. Making an effort to draw it from the scabbard, he changed his mind and the subject all of a sudden, and said to Willoughby, who was eyeing him anxiously the whole time, uncertain as to what he might do, "You've got to come with me, and hand me over the two best horses in camp, and you must be prepared to come a good six miles with me." Then for a few minutes he seemed lost in thought; but, seeing Willoughby was dressed, he ordered him to go out of the tent first. Only too glad to avail himself of the slightest chance to escape from his clutches, Willoughby went out in fear and trembling, as Grant was still carelessly playing with the revolver, and no sooner was he outside than he ran as hard as ever he could towards the guard, and called on them to turn out, Grant in the meantime making good his escape.

It was an awkward situation to find oneself in, and Willoughby, who is a cool card, got out of it very well, his usual *sang froid* standing him in good stead.

There can be no doubt that Grant is mad, although he has a splendidly intellectual face, for one can see in his eyes that the mind is unsettled, and tell by his speech that his chain of reasoning is disconnected, while his actions are uncertain; but he is only mad on one point, and has heaps of method in spite of it. I am sorry for the poor fellow, as he is a man of education, and has one of the finest faces I have ever seen. My own idea is that he was only taking a rise out of Willoughby.

After two days' search, Grant was found in the veldt and brought in, and his final examination by Grey was most amusing, and several of us who were in the next room listening were convulsed with laughter. I will not weary you with further detail, but, before he would answer a single question, he demanded that a chair and table should be given him, and when they were, he produced a pocket-book and pencil, and proceeded to make notes of everything Grey said to him. This made Grey dreadfully nervous, and, at times, it really appeared as if he was the prisoner and Grant the judge. One sentence afforded him the greatest satisfaction, judging by the way he chuckled to himself as he read it from his note-book, and kept on repeating,

“‘Kidnapping of an officer of the Blues by a bushranger.’ Read rather well in a society paper, eh? Very good, very good!”

At the end of the investigation Grey seemed altogether nonplussed, and at his wits’ ends to know what to do. So Grant was removed, let us hope this time into safer custody. There is only one way out of the difficulty, and that is to send him down country and hand him over to the authorities to deal with, as we have no means here of looking after men of unsound mind, and, after this escapade, Grant has naturally become a source of “*much anxiety*.”

CHAPTER VI.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 22nd July to 31st July, 1890.

THERE is nothing much of interest to tell you about, and yet my diary is by no means empty, chiefly in recording local trifles however.

It would astonish even the densest and most unconcerned of mortals to see the amount of official correspondence we get through each week, for though the "concern" is nothing more or less than a "Commercial Speculation" on a huge scale, "red-tapeism" is rampant, and if you ask me in confidence, I think we are much to be pitied. Sympathy of the deepest has always been mine for the "lion rampant," whose upright position must grow very irksome, and it has always occurred to me that the monarch of the animal kingdom, "*en couchant*," has infinitely the best of it; so I think an excessive prevalence of systematic official routine is at times apt to get as monotonous as a continuous flow of funerals passing and repassing the same spot!

The brunt of this at present falls entirely on our staff officer, a happiness, I believe, that is soon to be mine, so, as the villain of melodrama says, the time will come if it has not come already, when I shall write despatches and reports by the yard, but you won't catch me taking an ell when I am only given an inch. My idea of official correspondence, is to get to the point of what you want to say, at once, and to contract it into as small a space as you possibly can, making your meaning perfectly plain. In fewer words, stick to the point, and be as clear and concise as you can.

What Willoughby's theory is I don't know, but his practice is to write from "morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve," and late on into the night; and in a week I reckon that he must get over miles of paper, and wade through rivers of ink!

I must confess that I feel deeply concerned for our hard-working S.O., who cannot even find time to snatch a meal, though he manages somehow or other during the day to get through seventy or eighty Egyptian cigarettes, which are never out of his mouth, not even during a hasty snack.

Of course, we have a certain amount of anxiety for the column, and we allay it partly by means of that marvellous mental balsam, poetically christened Hope, but better still, in forwarding to the front without delay all stores that arrive !

I think I have already mentioned my veneration for Shakespeare, and how I never go anywhere without a Globe edition of his works: to this I add a love of Nature, amounting to a religion as devout as the fanaticism of the early Christians. When I can get away, which is not often, I ride off into the veldt, away from the sight of everybody, and out of sound of bugle and trumpet, and simply revel in the silence and beauty that lies around me ! I am not about to give you a lecture on the morals or religion contained in either Shakespeare or Nature, nor am I going to write you a thesis on the beauties to be found in both, so fear not and read on.

Unfortunately I am neither botanist nor geologist, but even without their aid I am deeply interested in all I see, and if our great Bard had seen what we are in the habit of looking on every day, I believe his descriptions of Nature, wonderfully beautiful as they are, would have been, if it were possible, still more beautiful. In the trees and bushes are tongues innumerable, resounding with the melody of birds that pipe and hum all day, teeming with life of every variety, from the climbing snake, that glides with sinuous grace beneath the green foliage, to the spider, of hues more various and gorgeous than the many-coloured coat of Joseph, who spins the silkiest of magic webs from one tree to another, bridging in some cases the streams that lie between !

In the pools and running brooks are books that man, with all his intellect, cannot surpass—books deep in the mystic lore of all ages, and in the silence of a mighty past, brimming over and breaking into a music which murmurs and ripples as it flows in a stream of deep and still water, or trickles soothingly over the shallow quicksands of life !

In the stones are sermons that will teach theology and its exponents lessons that they cannot learn elsewhere, and that

no book ever written can teach them ; but not in the stones alone, for there is good in everything, a good that is not to be found except in Nature, deaf and dumb to all appearance, but inspired as humanity is from the same eternal source !

If, like me, the reverend divine has a care to roam and revel in the manifold beauties of Nature, then a stroll round our camp would give him pleasure indescribable, and I feel sure that not only his theology, but his humanity would expand into a religion redolent with the fragrance of fresh and beauteous flowers, and bearing fruit in a broader and more consistent charity.

Above, about, around, and beneath him, in the skies, in the trees and shrubs, he will see light of the brightest kind, and colour of every hue and tint ; but if he wishes to study the subtle niceties, distinctions, and delicacies of Nature, let him look at the pebble stones and rocks. Look, did I say ? He cannot help seeing them ! The eye is constantly caught by colour, in a variety of shades infinitesimal, but not riveted, for no sooner does it light on one object under foot—a tiny pebble say—then it is attracted by another, a little way off—a stone perhaps—and yet another still further away—that happens to be a rock or boulder—all of them simply beautiful from the variety, yet perfect harmony, of the colouring. The chance of a lifetime for a lapidarian. Should he be a sporting parson, and wish to combine practice with pleasure, he can bring a gun, and if he is a fair shot, he will return with several brace of partridges, pheasants, and sand grouse. Or, should he be more ambitious, a rifle will procure him a buck, within a mile of our tents. Forgive me for moralising, and agree with me that my lines have fallen in a very pleasant place, a perfect paradise as far as Nature is concerned, that no quantity of red tape can destroy the effect of ; the cobwebs of which I completely blow away by a breath of the glorious Veldt. So you see that for once, at all events, luck has not deserted me !

Doyle, ubiquitous and energetic as ever, has returned from Tuli, and gone on to Pilapwie. He brings no news except that Harrison is now on his way to join the column, so I am obliged once more to fall back on local trivialities.

We have an extemporised troupe of nigger minstrels, consisting of youths ranging from ten to fifteen years of age, mostly Bechuanas and Mangwatos, picked up by the men *en route*, for whom they cook after a fashion, and do the dirty work. These young imps have remarkably sharp ears for

music, judging from the quick way they pick up popular melodies—music hall ditties usually—and the bugle and trumpet calls, which they keep whistling all over the place, until it becomes a trial that has to be put a stop to.

One bright little fellow, whose native name is too tortuous to get round, and whose face is a shade blacker than the Ace of Spades, is called Snowball. He is particularly intelligent, and has a rather nice voice. One of his accomplishments is to run through the *bayonet exercise* with a stick, which he does very smartly, giving the words of command accurately and distinctly—"Head parry" and "Shorten arms" being the only two he cannot pronounce—and it is very amusing to watch with what an air of importance he struts about, and the swagger he puts on as he imitates one of the officers, who is a sprig of nobility. For Snowball is a mimic born, who would soon make his fortune in London, if Augustus Harris the enterprising got hold of him, and the other nine little niggers we have are already jealous of his versatile talents.

Though we have not as yet seen any lions, we have heard them roar, at least our stable-guard have, close to the horse lines, something after the fashion of *Bombastes Furioso*, I am thinking, and the general opinion is that they were wolves, who were prowling about in search of old bones, or anything they could find.

Just fancy, I had an egg for my breakfast this morning, the first I have eaten for three months, which cost me sixpence. You sybarites in luxurious London will smile at this, but I can assure you, to me that egg was a treat surpassing anything the Amphitryon could turn out, and recollect, it was one of a few that a Boer farmer brought from the Transvaal. Not laid there, however, for he has brought hen and all. Indeed, the greatest hardship we have had to put up with is the want of fresh provisions, of fruit and vegetables especially, which are not to be had for love or money, and we have to content ourselves with tinned stuffs, Californian fruit being good but dear. Fresh meat is procurable to any extent, but we have, as a rule, to content ourselves with trek ox, as the natives will not part with their sheep and goats, and occasionally a taste of venison or game!

We have our Buffalo Bill in camp, a tall, handsome Californian, who belongs to the B.B.P., and who has broken in a couple of horses for us. He is, however, very rough and brutal with them, but a chum of his, who exults in the name

of Mexican Joe, a typical cowboy, has much better hands, and is far gentler in his treatment. He is a curious-looking little fellow, as hard as iron and very wiry, who has evidently been much knocked about in his time, for a great part of his cranium is silver-plated. I have a grey horse in my troop which was perfectly unrideable, that he has subdued in a few days, but not before it threw him, saddle and all. No one else could even saddle it, but Mexican Joe, on his first attempt, got so far as to mount into his own saddle, of Mexican make. He wasn't there a second, however, when the beast bucked to such an extent as to displace him, and deposit the saddle on the ground. Never losing his temper, Joe gave it a good lunging, then resaddled and took it for a long ride, and now it is perfectly quiet, and the best horse in the troop.

Matches of football and cricket between the various troops, as well as between the B.B.P. and ourselves, have been frequent of late, and have helped to while away many a weary hour. In one of them, Knight, of my troop, took four wickets in five balls, and the first ball of the next over, bowled by Parker, also took a wicket. Quite a record in its way, is it not? A rather nice-looking boy who was umpiring in one of them the other day, has the name of Parnell, and is a nephew of the ex-Irish leader, so I am informed.

By the way, I have just finished reading *When we were Boys*, by W. O'Brien, sent me by my wife, along with an opera hat which I am reserving for Loben's special edification when we meet.

I must say I like it (the book) immensely, not because of the romance and ridicule which attaches to the author, but for itself. It is well-written, interesting, and its aim is manifest —the theme of a man who has his cause at heart, however ridiculous he made himself in prison. Still he seems to have made good use of his time, and if he has done his cause no good, he has, at all events, laid bare certain grievances which exist, and given to the world a pretty story decked in the language of poetry and pathos!

Au revoir for the present, as I have nothing more to tell you, even in the way of unconsidered trifles, except that D troop has marched for Tuli, and the B.B.P. and ourselves are left alone!

CHAPTER VII.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 1st to 10th August, 1890.

I HAVE not, as yet, touched upon politics, because it is not always "policy" to do so, and, as Bulwer Lytton points out, there is a nice distinction between the two. "Politics," as he says, "is the art of being wise for others," and "Policy, the art of being wise for one's self."

Also, because I consider that the history of South African politics speaks for itself, and the less said of our policy the better. It has been a blot on our Colonial escutcheon, and when the history of Queen Victoria's reign is written in a true and liberal spirit, from an independent and unprejudiced standpoint, it will remain a blot in a reign otherwise glorious and remarkable for the reform, progress, and advancement of morality, science, and every culture that improves and elevates humanity! But, if you ask me, I quite believe that Rhodes is striking out a new line for himself, and if what Colonials say of him is true, vigour and masterly activity will be infused into it. Certainly, and I say this in strict confidence, there is more in our move north towards the Zambesi than meets the eye, and on this point I am firmly convinced. Yet I cannot speak of the why and wherefore of my conviction, partly from inability to do so, and wholly because I must be wise for myself. No little bird has piped it into my ear, nor is it a sudden inspiration, but an unmistakable instinct that can in no way be accounted for.

This is the first mention I have made of the Cape Premier, for the simple reason that I have not yet come in contact with him, and I prefer first of all to gauge him by my own impressions, so that a subsequent comparison with public, or other opinion, will be, to say the least of it, interesting, if not instructive. If hearsay is to be believed, then, Rhodes is the coming man in South Africa, and already among a certain

section—the Mutual Adulation Society of Cape Colony—the worship of the Golden Calf has been renewed. Curiously enough, too, some of the staunchest supporters of this modern revival are men whose ancestors incurred the wrath of Moses, the law-giver, for their gross infatuation. Another historical repetition, and a fact worthy the research of physiology. Reputed to be worth over a million, brimful of ability and ambition, Rhodes is certainly the present centre-piece of South African politics; but it still remains to be seen whether he will achieve the success predicted of him by his followers.

Neither have I spoken about our friends of the B.B.P. who, though nothing much intellectually, are, socially speaking, a very good set of fellows.

MacAdam, a brother of our man, Laurie, a subaltern in the gunners, Pemberton, Elphinstone, and Coventry, are about the best; and we see a great deal of one another lunching or dining from mess to mess. But they have one youth, rather a versatile genius in his way, who is a host in himself, writes F.R.G.S. after his name, and causes us no end of amusement. He is a nice young fellow, but, for a town-bred youth, his simplicity is as refreshing as the rain after a long spell of heat and drought. He can sing a right good song, and dances a break-down extremely well; but he is most interesting when recounting his travels in Morocco, which he does in a style so original as to have earned for himself the sobriquet of Blowitz of Morocco. Not because he talks of that mysteriously imperial city, except about twice a day, for it is very difficult to persuade him to tell you how he pierced the veil of mystery that screens the place, and penetrated the expansive waste of the Great Sahara, but simply and solely because of his striking originality. It seems that about a year ago, in company with Joseph Thomson, Blowitz made a trip in Morocco, and ascended, or crossed, some range of mountains—Atlas, I think—and, having made copious notes, was elected an F.R.G.S.! Certainly his experience of things in general, but of desert steeds in particular, is unique, and quite unequalled in the history of humanity. Though it is only under high pressure, and by sheer moral force, not unlike the extraction of a stubborn cork, after using a hundred or two of wrist and elbow power, that you can induce him to repeat it a third time, and it is needless for me to say that it is true. “Strange, but true—true, sir, though you may think me a blank liar”—I refrain from giving B.’s adjectives in full, they

are too forcible—"but it's as true as gospel, and I can swear to it."

A chorus of "No! No!"

"No necessity to," reassures Blowitz, and he goes on—"On one occasion, as true as I sit here, we rode on the same horses for 400 hours at a stretch!—hours, mind you, not miles—in seven days—days, recollect, not a week! And we frequently rode from seventeen to eighteen consecutive hours straight on end, and without a check even, only giving the horses one feed!"

Interruption by one of the audience, who, one and all, are concealing pent-up hilarity underneath a mask of excessive gravity, "And no drink?"

"Not a drink, sir. The horses in Morocco, like the camels, never drink: they don't want it."

Another interruption—"Teetotal lot, I suppose."

Without noticing it, Blowitz resumes, "How I stood it, sir, I don't know; but I give you my word I did, and it's true."

General chorus—"Of course it is, old chap; no one doubts you for a moment."

"Ah! they are wonderful brutes, sir, wonderful! None like them in the world."

Chorus of interruptions—"I should think not."

Someone from the end of the table—"Let's hope not, for your sake."

Pent-up hilarity bursts into a loud and boisterous *feu-de-joi* of guffaws, above which Blowitz's voice rings out, "You may think me a"—here a very powerful adjective is dropped, hurled figuratively at our heads I might say—"liar; but I tell you it's true, every bit of it, as true as my name is—" but his voice is drowned in yells of laughter louder than ever.

This little comedy, scenes and acts all in one, usually occurs once a week, and always after dinner. It is our desert—in fact, the only one we get—and never fails to enliven the prevailing monotony. So easily pleased are we of Macloutsie! But if you ask me, there is a good deal more childishness to be found in certain sections of grown-up humanity than we imagine: and, in a worldly sense, well for the others, though not for themselves, perhaps, that it is so!

So you see that the *Times* is not the only possessor of a Blowitz, or of a modern *Admirable Crichton*, as ours is. For a heathen Chinee young man, a childlike and bland young man, a most unassuming young man is Blowitz of Morocco,

rivalling, in the artlessness of his simplicity, Bill Nye's friend, Ah Sin—Ah Sin—alas ! Ah Sin.

But to revert to something more serious.

I have omitted to mention that the heliograph has been established between Pilapwie and Tuli, the B.B.P. working it as far as Macloutsie, and ourselves on to Tuli, the hilly configuration of the country making it quite practical ; but the thick mists that prevail in the morning, now especially bad, and the general density of the atmosphere during the day, are against us, rendering the operation ever so much more difficult. In fact, at times there is no getting through at all for a day or two, or even for days and days.

Though we are now in the middle of the dry season, very heavy dews fall at night, saturating everything, and, evidently, the action of the sun is to draw up out of the reeking moisture the heavy mists which hang about all over the country at a slight elevation, but especially over river-beds, valleys, and all low-lying depressions, at times even to so late an hour as mid-day, and, ordinarily speaking, up to 10 a.m. And when, at last, this vapoury exhalation appears to melt away before the fiery vigour of the sun, a thick haze supervenes, through which the helio cannot penetrate. Indeed, it is quite noticeable that these morning mists denote heat, and the thicker the mist the hotter the day ; and another feature that has struck me is the manufacture of the mirage out of sun and haze ; at all events, it is of common daily occurrence, and also interferes with our signalling operations. In other words, it seems to me as if the uprising of the dew into a thick vapour, meeting the sun's rays at a certain point and at an angle, breaks their natural course, which is direct, and bends it back at an angle so acute as to form the optical illusion we call mirage : in one word, refraction.

Certain it is that the atmosphere here, so far as I have seen, is not so clear as in India and Afghanistan, where we used to helio as much as sixty miles without a break ; most of our stations being from twenty to thirty miles apart, and even less—and we have three stations between here and Tuli, a distance of sixty miles—while only the first one out from Pilapwie is more than the latter distance, but under forty miles.

Speaking on this subject reminds me that I have just received a message from Turner at Tuli, to this effect :—“ Helio to Pilapwie to stop Doyle from going to Buluwayo. Colnbrander here with Indunas from the king. Tell him to

come here at once to meet them. Most important. August 3rd."

This was sent yesterday, but only got through this morning, and I have sent it on to Mr. Hepburn, as I hear Doyle has left Pilapwie, asking him to make every effort to stop Doyle and deliver the message. I have also sent a native despatch rider, one of Khama's men, confirming the helio, in case it can't get through, besides two native runners with a letter to Sam Edwards at Tati, requesting him to stop Doyle, and do his best to give him the message.

A Mr. Moore, one of Jameson's prospectors, arrived in camp this morning. I gave him a permit to enter Mashonaland, the first I have issued. He says he knows for a fact that Colnbrandner has a message from Lobengula, ordering Pennefather not to advance beyond Tuli, and that if he does he will have to stop him.

Father Prestige, who has just returned from Tuli, where he goes every fortnight to hold service, thinks, as he has done all along, that fighting is certain, in fact, imminent; and he states that Colnbrandner has gone on to the column with the king's message. This looks ominous.

I have had a kind of petty conspiracy and attempt to foster a mutiny in my troop, which I promptly nipped in the bud, curiously enough among my non-commissioned officers, and, more curious still, all three of them old soldiers, two of them who are sergeants having served in the cavalry, and one, a corporal, being a deserter from an infantry regiment.

Drink, I imagine, was the motive spirit chiefly, and, knowing that I had not the power to discharge them without reference to the colonel, they took advantage of it, and tried to intimidate me, thinking I would not do so on my responsibility. However, I very soon dispossessed them of the idea, and turned them out of camp. One of them, a rare blackguard, grew impudent, and talked big as soon as he had got his discharge papers; but I stopped him once and for all by threatening to send him under armed escort to Khama. The other two were very sorry for themselves, for they have forfeited all rights to farms and mining claims, which, as members of the Police Force, they were entitled to.

More horses, ninety-two in number, came in on the 9th, in charge of a man called Black, a Yorkshireman, and it was quite pleasant to hear his north country burr. They are the finest and the best looked-after lot we have had so far.

The runners I sent to Tati returned here at 2.30 p.m. to-day, the 10th inst., with a reply from Sam Edwards that Doyle has not come to Tati, but has gone to Kimberley. Rather a sell after all our fuss and anxiety, but Doyle is too wide-awake to be caught tripping so easily by crafty old Loben. Curious coincidence, a letter addressed to me, which had evidently gone to Tati by mistake, and had been lying there some time, has been forwarded by Sam Edwards, who tells me that the runners, who left here at 6.30 p.m. on the 4th inst., arrived at Tati at 6.30 a.m. on the 8th inst., *i.e.* in eighty-four hours, and that they left there at 12.30 p.m. on the same day, so that their return journey was in fifty hours. Not good going, as the distance across country as they would go is said to be about sixty miles. To finish with a trifle, the prevailing wind here seems to blow from the east, bringing with it clouds of dust, which, singularly enough, is always worse on mail days, and as I sit and write in our tumble-down shanty of an orderly-room, the dust comes sweeping through chinks and crannies innumerable, that are large enough to let in slanting sunbeams, literally smothering everything and drying up the ink as fast as I write. A useful wind for Egypt, and an excellent substitute for the special powder which is used out there as a blotter!

I forgot to mention that the column were at the Babian River in the Banyan country, on the 22nd, when last I heard. All quiet and no news. It does not look as if they will have any fighting in getting to Mount Hampden, but what complications may afterwards arise in having a crafty and treacherous foe to deal with it is hard to say !

CHAPTER VIII.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 11th August to 31st August, 1890.

AGAIN we are confronted with the Matabele question ! Maddock, an American, generally called Yankee Maddock, prospector to the Company, and Backhouse Thompson breakfasted with us. The former, who arrived here on the 10th inst. from Tati, told us with a strong twang that every one there, even Edwards, is prepared to make a bolt for it. He had intended to make a short cut across Matabeleland to Mount Hampden, but was advised strongly at Tati not to go, as he might "get picked up" on the way, as he put it. He "guesses" the natives will assuredly have a shy at the column, and then clear out across the Zambesi with bag and baggage ! The latter, who has much less to say for himself, but who has been at Buluwayo and knows the country, is also of opinion that they will shew fight, yet he is reticent in giving it, a sure sign that he knows more about it than the garrulous Yank. But such I think is often the case—greater knowledge and reticence combining, while ignorance and garrulity go hand-in-hand together.

Colnbrander rode in here at 10 a.m. on the 13th inst., having returned from a point ten miles beyond the Lundi River, where he overtook the column, occupying some three miles or more of road. He gave Loben's message to Pennefather, to the effect that the force was not to advance any further, and that if it attempted to do so he would stop it. To which Pennefather replied, "I take my orders from Mr. Rhodes, not from King Lobengula. My orders are to go to Mashonaland, and go I will." A reply savouring more of melodrama than diplomacy, under the circumstances, I am thinking, for Loben has more to say to it than we have, and he certainly knows more about it.

Colnbrander is middle-sized, strongly built, and hard

looking, with an intelligent and pleasant face. Of Dutch extraction, but very Anglicised. He is in the employ of the Chartered Co., and as he is said to be in Lobengula's confidence, at least more so than any other white man, his opinion is worth having.

According to him, it is a popular fallacy about the Matabele being in readiness to cross the Zambesi, and make for fresh pastures, and he cannot understand how such an extraordinary rumour has been promulgated. He will not give a decided answer as to whether there will be fighting or not, but the balance, if any, of his opinion, leans to the former. Bearing out my previous remark as to knowledge and ignorance. The king, he says, is averse to war, and is strongly opposed to it. The nation inclined towards, and the young bloods thirsting for it. Who will prevail he will not or cannot say with either confidence or authority. Colnbrander left by post-cart this evening for Kimberley to see Mr. Rhodes, and I am sorry he has gone so soon, as I had hoped to have some further conversations with him.

So you see that opinion is still divided. All I can say is, that should the young Matabele bloods get out of hand and beyond the restraint of the king, the expedition will not reach Mount Hampden, hampered as it will be by a big convoy of waggons stretched out to such an awkward length, drilled as the men have been, and handled as they will be. Against this the enemy will have at least two decided advantages on their side, viz. (1) knowledge of the country, and (2) choice of initiative. God help the column, if they are caught on the march. But somehow I don't think there is any fear on that score.

It is hard, therefore, to evolve any definite conclusion out of all this chaos and confusion of ideas, but I am rather inclined to think that blood will be shed ere long, not, however, until the expedition accomplishes its object, and when the pioneers are scattered all over the country prospecting. If not then, it is bound to come sooner or later, the former for choice. It does not seem to be within the bounds of common sense to suppose that a nation of ferocious savages, whose all-pervading, all-absorbing instinct is blood and rapine, will allow us to quietly take possession of a country which is virtually theirs by right of conquest, without in any way resenting it. To imagine it even is a direct insult. No Kaffir tribe has to my knowledge ever submitted tamely or

without a struggle of some kind, during some period of their subjugation or independence, and I think South African history will bear me out in this statement.

Forgive me if I have bored you with this Matabele question, but as it is a subject that is naturally uppermost in our minds, you must overlook my delinquency, and, as I warned you at starting, take rough and smooth together. All I hope is that it hasn't given you a nightmare, as it sometimes appears to do to one of ours.

And yet there is no getting away from it, for we are daily confronted with it in some form or other; and as a result of what Colnbrander said, I have sent some runners to Tati, the same two that went there on the 4th inst., with four letters from him, and three horses—two of our own, and one of the B.B.P.'s, to Sam Edwards at Tati. The horses are for Major Maxwell and others at Buluwayo, to enable them to escape if necessary, but they will never reach them, for virtually they are close prisoners, and Loben will not be weak enough to allow the gees to be handed over to them. However, as long as they are in the king's hands their lives will be safe enough, which is some comfort. I have been forwarding all the stores I can possibly get hold of to the front, so that they will have enough to tide them over the rainy season, when the road will be again open, and we can send more. It is always better to be on the safe side, and have a surplus of commissariat and ordnance supplies, than to draw the line too fine, and run short; and ever since I have been in charge at our advance base, I have been working on this sound and practical principle, but altogether against great odds in (1) the inability of the B.T.A. to supply in sufficient quantities, (2) scarcity of transport and difficulty in obtaining it, (3) the opposition of the secretary, Rutherford Harris, at Kimberley, and (4) Turner's negligence in failing to supply me with weekly returns.

The B.T.A., it appears, have a contract to supply us, and by our contract we are not at liberty to go elsewhere. However, as they failed, according to agreement, to forward certain supplies by a given date, I helio'd to Mr. Fry, their manager at Pilapwie, "Can you, or can you not, supply stores as per arrangement? Helio back." His answer being in the negative, and it being imperatively necessary that the goods in question should be forwarded before the rains set in, I immediately made arrangements with Homan, who is agent here

for Julius Weil at Mafeking, to carry out the order, reporting my action in the matter to Rutherford Harris. He, for some reason or other, evidently based on narrow and illogical premises, has forbidden me to receive or forward the supplies. This order I have no intention of obeying. However smart Dr. Harris may be in writing letters, not only as a civilian does he shew his ignorance of military principles, but in the mere rudiments of common sense he is wofully deficient; and, as for looking ahead, he apparently cannot even see as far as his nose. What he takes me for I cannot say or do not care, but if he thinks that I am going to allow the column to run short of food, because he has some petty spite against Julius Weil, he is greatly mistaken.

I am pleased to say that I got off eleven waggons to Tuli on the 15th inst., seven and a half of them containing food, three ammunition, and half a one loaded with rifles. But I have again had to write to Turner, pointing out the imperative necessity of forwarding all stores to the front, at any risk and at any price, while the road is open, as we cannot say when it may be closed; and I have asked him to furnish me with a weekly return of arrivals at and departure of waggons and stores, and the balance on hand at Tuli, for without this information I am entirely in the dark.

Maurice Gifford rode in from Pilapwie, and put up with us. He is seemingly on a tour of inspection, and has gone on to Tuli to have a look round.

News with us is certainly below par. Our present fears, our future hopes and aspirations, might fill a page or two, but I expect they would prove dull reading. And yet in this uninhabited expanse, far away from the din and clatter of civilisation and the busy haunts of the human bee, there is at present little else to tell you of, and our life, to a sky-dropped stranger, would appear at first a waste of energy, or even a failure; but he would soon learn to dismiss such an idea from his mind. For what we are now doing will, in the future, bear rich fruit. We are but laying the foundation-stone of an empire that will blossom hereafter into the fairest in Africa.

Of course, stories, like straws, are flying about, but we pay no attention to them. I might fall back on the time-worn topic, and tell you that the weather is growing warmer, but that will hardly interest you as much as it does us who feel it,

and you have your own, with its winds and falling leaves and russet tints, to think of.

As to the romance of our present undertaking, I cannot speak. Even the halo of it is dimmer and shadowier than a rainbow seen on a cloudy or misty day, or, to be nearer the point, than its reflection; but there is no doubt all the same that the rainbow is behind the clouds, and will stand out in all the beauty and richness of colour when they roll away.

Our creature comforts, taking into consideration surrounding circumstances, leave us little to complain of, except dust-storms, which are frequent, and devils which are still more constant.

Sentiment there is none, leisure or distractions almost *nil*. Shooting can be had, but now one has to go some distance for it; but there's the rub. I cannot leave camp for more than a day, or, at least, I do not care to, so my only relaxation is a ride into the veldt in the afternoon to enjoy Nature and blow away the cobwebs. And I do enjoy it most thoroughly; but change, I think, ought to be a necessity and not a luxury, for, after all, variety is the spice of life, is it not? I am afraid you will think I am in the dumps. Not so. Like a sensible and sanguine Paddy, I always adapt myself to existing conditions, and am only trying, in a feeble kind of way, to give you a picture of our life, or rather a smudge of it.

Your account of Stanley's new book, and your reflections on memory, with its wonderful art of healing old hurts, have greatly interested me. To a great extent I am with you. True, the rubs and bruises are easily forgotten, but how about the wounds? Do not they break out afresh and bleed inwardly? Is time long enough, or memory strong enough to efface them? I am almost inclined to doubt it. Yet, as you say, the bright spots certainly do stand out from the hard knocks and worries as effectually as the evening star, dazzling and brilliant, shines out from amid the other gems which twinkle merrily all round it!

But since when have you taken to moralising, and what do you, who have always lived in ease and comfort, know about the compensating thorn? Just fancy, at your age, longing for the old days of illusion and childhood! You, who have all you wish for, and who ought to be as happy as the day is long. An old stager like myself, who has received blows that have made him stagger and reel, and from which

he has scarcely recovered, might talk of thorns, but you ! Well, well, life is an enigma, no doubt. But do you really think that the thorns do in any way compensate for the roses ? I suppose, at all events, one has to make the best of them, and take the rough with the smooth. You, at all events, seem somehow to avoid the pricks and scratches, and are having a pleasant time of it with the roses.

One of our amusements here is to make a huge fire, around which we sit and squat in a large circle, and listen to songs from those who can warble and those who cannot. Usually called a camp fire. The B.B.P. entertained us the other evening to songs of every sort, comic and sentimental, but Blowitz was the star of the evening, and in his element, his Highland fling bringing the house down, and as this was fairly immense, with the star-spangled sky as its canopy, the solid earth its basement, and the gloomy horizon its supports, you can better imagine than I can describe the effect. The ruins next morning were sad to contemplate. All that remained of the glorious bonfire was a heap of white ashes and smouldering embers. Food for reflection, as to the stability and limit of life. Dust to dust, and ashes to ashes ! Surely not. Or has life no end at all, and is death but a translation and a departure to another and a higher stage ? Behind the veil, behind the veil. But why torture and mystify ourselves ? Live and let live ! Live your life usefully, if not nobly, and let the mystic hereafter provide its own reward.

I have removed into a new orderly-room, which is rather more weather-proof than the old one, so that writing is less of a strain now than formerly.

Radi Kladi, 70 mounted, and 200 foot men returned on 19th from the Lundi on their way to Pilapwie, as Pennefather no longer required them. I am glad to see them come back, because under the circumstances I consider it unwise to employ Mangwatos, when it is our manifest policy to keep in with Lobengula. Compromising or trimming policies, in such cases, invariably fail.

On the same evening, at 6 o'clock, I received letters from Hannay and Hepburn by a native runner who left Pilapwie the previous morning—from 90 to 100 miles across country in thirty-six hours. It is about stores and waggons for the front, and I purposely sent Hannay to hurry them up. He writes that the former are on their way, but there is a difficulty about the latter, which I had hoped to hire from Khama. In

fact, the question of transport is beset with difficulties, and I am more confident than ever that we should have had our own transport. The expense at first would have been greater, but in the end economy!

Harford, who has come to join us as a subaltern, arrived by waggon this morning; also Edwards, a carpenter, who gets £1 a day, rations and quarters. The country this, evidently, for skilled workmen.

As the grazing is very poor all about here, some time ago I sent a lot of the horses, under Fitzgerald and Stanley White, to a large pool on the Macloutsie, about eight miles out. As I was feeling rather seedy, I rode out there on my sergeant-major's pony. The men were very pleased to see me, and gave me a basin of delicious hot soup, which pulled me together, and I am glad to say the horses look very fit, and all the better for their outing. Chinnery's pony was very fresh, and carried me splendidly—out in 49 minutes, and back in 55, having walked him into camp the last mile and a half.

Another batch of 76 horses arrived under Jeffries, and four more waggons, laden with supplies, have left for Tuli. I wish I could say forty instead, but to shew you what I have to contend against, four native waggons that have come in with mealies decline to go any further, and eight European waggons that are here asked £20 apiece to proceed to Tuli, and refused to go beyond it at £1 for every 100 lbs. of weight and rations for all hands. And, to make matters worse, Khama, whom I am depending on for at least twenty or more waggons, writes by "special messenger," through Mr. Hepburn, in a most unsatisfactory strain. His instructions to the special messenger are to *persuade*, not to *order*, the waggons on to Tuli and Mashonaland. This is bunkum, I consider, and I shall soon lose every shred of patience I ever possessed. I asked Khama for a man in authority, whose persuasive powers would have had some weight with the wagon owners who refuse to go beyond Tuli, and who even are chary of passing here, notwithstanding we are paying them high prices, and he sends me a hireling whom they won't pay the slightest attention to. Nervousness of the Matabele is partly the reason of their chariness, and fear that they will not be back before the rains set in. However, I intend making as much of the Special as possible, so as to put him in conceit with himself. Accordingly, he has been domiciled in the old orderly-room hut, and rigged from top to toe in a

brand-new suit, patches and all, and a smasher hat, befeathered as fitting the man and the occasion. And he is strutting about outside, like a young peacock shewing off its plumage for the first time.

A few mere items, and I have done. Maurice Gifford returned from Tuli, and gone back to Pilapwie; a mail from the column has come in; no news, but in consequence of which Lendy has left, with 56 horses, for the front.

Many of the recruits that Harris has been sending us of late are most atrocious riders. Some of them have never been on a horse in their lives, and others, I should imagine, have not even seen one. Much of our time is frittered away in consequence. Culpable, surely, in a country where hundreds of men who can ride and shoot are to be obtained for the asking almost. But what can you expect, with civilian management, and no system?

The grazing guard came in two days ago minus eighteen of our horses, and although parties have been searching all over the veldt for them, they are still missing.

Mr. Stecker, business manager of the B.T.A., who came in by post-cart from Pilapwie, lunched and dined with us. He seems a quiet, decent kind of man, clear-headed and shrewd into the bargain.

The frogs are croaking gaily to-night. This is the second time in the last three days, and I have not heard them previously. The rains are not expected till November. So what does it mean, and are the froggies on the wrong scent?

It is three weeks ago now since Grey was robbed by one of his men, who, not content with stealing some of his personal effects, walked off with his best charger into the Transvaal; but, as yet, no trace of the fugitive has been discovered, I presume, although four search parties, each under a subaltern, have been out hunting for them ever since, and not one of them has yet returned. The only remaining subaltern has also been away down country on duty, and has only just come back. Two out of the four skippers are on leave for a fortnight, so that virtually the work of the corps is being carried on by the non-commissioned officers, the sergeants performing the duties of the orderly officer. I thought we were casual enough, but we have not yet got as far as this. Evidently there is something very casual in the air of South Africa!

CHAPTER IX.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 1st September to 13th September, 1890.

IT is a lovely night, and the moon is shining as she alone knows hows to in these clear, bright-skied latitudes. The whole camp is sunk in slumber, and a silence almost death-like, broken only by the low growl and hoarse yelp of some restless, prowling cur, or the steady tramp of the sentry on his post, and an occasional challenge in a loud voice, which lulls me into a sense of security, and a drowsiness that threatens to overwhelm me with sleep. While between the nods, I can see the soft and silvery effulgence of the moon does not dim, but adds to the lustre of "the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels," as they blossom "in the infinite meadows of heaven." Beautiful idea, beautifully expressed is it not by—I was about to add Longfellow, but sleep conquered, and at 2 o'clock this morning I woke to find myself lying on my bed fully dressed. The fact is that I had been out all day in the veldt—the hottest we have yet had—and the open air had made me sleepy. Besides, I felt seedy and out of sorts, and during the past week have been up to my eyes in correspondence. The weather of late has been very close and disagreeable, but a dust-storm has been raging all day, awfully unpleasant while it lasted, which will blow away the sultriness for a few days at all events. This at least has been my experience in India and Egypt. Sand- or dust-storms, like thunder, not only clear the air, but purify it, hence the south-easters in the colony being known as Cape doctors.

I am thankful to say the late blow has been no exception, and its effect simply wonderful. Ever since last night it has been cool and pleasant, and life is once more bearable. I am afraid I have commenced this effort badly, giving you the idea that I am heartily sick of Macloutsie, and your impression is not far out. It is the camp, with its monotony of official

routine, that palls on me, and yet this will be quite as irksome after a week or two of Tuli. Yet when, a few days ago, I received an order from the colonel to hurry up to Tuli, I mentally described a series of capers, and the thermometer of my mind rose several degrees at a bound, while the men were delighted beyond measure at the prospect of a change of any kind. At first I could not get any transport, and there was much depression accordingly. But yesterday I secured some waggons, and we were on the point of starting, when this morning, the up-country mail came in, and the first letter I opened contained an order cancelling the previous one. You see that although telegraphic communication is a long way off us, we live in an atmosphere of uncertainty, and there is no telling what a day may bring forth.

To say that my mental mercury fell rapidly to zero would scarcely describe the state of my feelings, and the disappointment in the troop is general and bitter, as, after so many months' stagnation, the bare fact of a move, though only from the frying-pan into the fire, is acceptable, because we feel that the fire is rather nearer our goal than the pan !

For my part, there is far too much office-work here. . What I want is an out-door life, full of action, energy, and excitement, which is a better fillip to me than all the tonics ever invented ! Forgive me for the repetition and egotism that is stamped on every page of my letters, but at times I find it very difficult to write. I wish it were otherwise. By the way, why do we wish ? Shakespeare says, with all the wisdom of a great mind, that "the wish is father to the thought," and undoubtedly it is. But it is seldom, if ever, that one comes true ; yet we go on wishing to the end of the chapter, many of us, as we are passing into the mysterious unknown, hoping for something that only a miracle could accomplish. Are wish and hope one and the same thing ? In both, desire and expectation are strong, and in both anticipated ! Or are they only closely connected ?

To me a wish is not unlike a "merry thought" snapped in two. You seldom or ever get the right end ; and even if you do, what do you gain by it ? Who on earth gave it so happy a name ? "Bone of contention" strikes me as being far more appropriate. What say you ?

My own two ponies, who are great friends, and who were missing with the others the other day, walked into camp in time for the early morning feed, neither of them looking any

the worse ; but as the rest are still missing, I determined to go out myself and have a look for them.

After breakfast I got on Master Punch, my favourite pony, putting Bredenkamp on No. 2. We rode out in a south-easterly direction to the place where the horses had been grazing when last seen, and it was not long before Bredenkamp struck the spoor. Of course, I left the tracking in his hands entirely, and very cleverly he did it, too. The grass is withered and burnt up, and the ground is very hard and dry, and in many parts rocky, and in such places he kept losing the trail ; but when at a loss he always dismounted, and his practised eye picked it up in a moment when mine could not see even a vestige of it. Working in half a circle, we found the spoor cross the Pilapwie road, several miles out from camp, and knowing that Corporal Divine was out in this direction, we rode straight for Corporal Fitzgerald's camp, and passing it on our left, we went two or three miles beyond, but without success ; so we turned and off-saddled in a small spruit that runs into the Macloutsie, about two miles south of the drift. Here we found a nice pool of water, in a pretty little glade, with lots of shade, and some green grass for the ponies, who went at it with a will.

The country through which we had ridden was covered with spoor of koodoo and quagga, some of them fairly fresh ; but we only saw two stembok, however, and did not even get a shot at either of them. As it was growing late, we on-saddled when the ponies had eaten their fill, and rode towards camp. On our way back, Punch nearly trod on a large snake, without a shy, or showing the slightest fear, the reptile disappearing into a hole close by in a twinkling.

Some prospectors, who came in a few days ago, have made themselves quite a charming little camp close to Macloutsie drift, under the shelter of a belt of large trees. They were good enough to offer us a cup of tea as we passed, an offer that we accepted gratefully. They are in no hurry to get on until they receive news of the column, by which time the Veldt will be in better condition than it is now for the cattle. Wise men, I say. We were not sorry when we got into camp with the setting sun, as we had covered at least thirty miles, with only one short rest.

You have no idea what difficulties we have to contend against in running a post-cart between here and Tuli, as the natives always desert and leave us in the lurch at the critical

moment. Indeed, if it wasn't for the extraordinary exertions of Van Heerden, one of our troopers, who always goes in charge, and frequently brings it in without a leader or native of any kind, it would never come in at all. So I have been obliged to make an example of three natives who refused just now to go on with the cart. All three of them were well flogged, and, needless to say, went on at once.

I have just returned from an inspection of the Signalling Stations, and a visit to Tuli, the first real outing I have had since my arrival. I cannot tell you how thoroughly I have enjoyed it, and how much better I am for the jaunt.

It was a lovely clear frosty morning when I got up, in time to see the warm red sun infuse a little light and colour into the steely blue expanse above, and the dull green stretch beneath. As I had some work to do, I sent Bredenkamp off leading Punch, to await me at Lipokwe, a resting place *en route*.

At 11.30 a.m. I started on No. 2, passing through some really pretty pieces of scenery; one glade in particular, through which runs a small spruit, whose banks are lined with palm trees, left a very pleasant impression. Beyond this is a small drift, with dense brush and trees all round, which seemed to be literally alive with a species of tiny bird, not unlike a humming-bird, who were twittering and hopping about in a state of intense excitement, but what the cause of it was I could not see. A little further on I came to the summit of a hill, on which the trees were perfectly bare and leafless, evidently the effect of exposure to sun and wind acting on a stony sterile soil, and at 1 p.m. I got to Lipokwe, where I met Hicks-Beach, who was out shooting.

After resting an hour, Bredenkamp and I rode on, meeting Capper, who was on his way to No. 1 station, at 3.30 p.m. The country here is flat, and the road heavy, but occasionally we came across pretty stretches which compensated us for all other shortcomings, and at 4.35 p.m. we reached Semeleale, which is a post-station in charge of Corporal Fletcher. Having seen to business first, I had a long talk with Fletcher, one of the few Scotchmen I have met who is full of a dry humour, which is very amusing. He shewed me a letter that he had lately received from an old Crimean veteran, called Hilyear, who is our quartermaster-sergeant at Macloutsie. The letter was couched in rather insulting language, but Fletcher declared to me that he had done nothing to annoy the old man,

who, at times, is inclined to be very crusty. However, I told him to take no notice of it whatever. "Neither will I, sir," he replied, "only to tell him that his liver is out of order." And the next day he sent Hilyear the following couplet—

"When with liver you are ill,
Mind you take a Beecham's pill,"

with the necessary effect evidently, for I have heard no more of the matter.

Fletcher made us as comfortable as he could, and the next morning early we rode out to see the horses which had been sent here to pick up previous to going up country under Lendy. We found the kraal in a charming glade, close to which we put up two duyker, that we were afraid to fire at owing to the proximity of the camp.

Having breakfasted, we rode on to No. 2 Signal Station, which stands on a hill that is not very hard to climb. The view of the country from here to the north, south, and west is very fine, while to the east it is shut in by hills. The men in charge seemed to be cheery enough, but they are badly in want of a fowling-piece and ammunition, as they have any amount of game all round them. I have promised to send them a good supply of the latter at once, and to secure them the former if it is possible.

Close to where they signal from are the ruins of a small fort that had been built of cobble stones, gathered in the vicinity, I suppose, and evidently with the greatest of care and attention, for they fit into one another very neatly, and are beautifully put together. Little of it is left except a wall or bastion facing the east, standing about three feet high, and extending for a few yards only. In what had been the north-east angle are the remains of a keep or quarter of some kind, divided into very small rooms, not unlike prisoners' cells. The men have made excavations all about the place, but so far without success.

I have heard some mention of similar ruins on a larger scale, close to one of the drifts over the Crocodile River into the Transvaal, and not so very far from here, said to have been built by the Arabs. This one appears to me to be more recent, and I am inclined to trace it to the Portuguese, who we know were in Mashonaland under General Francisco de Barreto, so it is not at all unlikely that they found their way down to these parts. At any rate, it is evident that both ruins were the work of the same people.

Leaving here we rode past Baobab Spruit, where we have another signal station, between seven or eight miles from Tuli, at which place we arrived about 2 p.m., getting, when within two miles of it, a fine view of the surrounding country, which is wooded, hilly, and rugged.

Turner, who is in command here, was out shooting, but Codrington and Goody did the honours right well. They had no news, not even a shave to give me, and as I left early the next morning, I saw nothing of the place. On our return, Bredenkamp and I climbed the hill at Baobab Spruit to have a chat with the signallers.

Young Dillon, my mathematical professor, who, with his Irish blue eyes, bright face, and curly locks, looks more like an art Bohemian, was lively and cheerful as usual.

In the course of conversation he told me, with quite an air of gravity, that he had come up here to make his fortune, and that he would be perfectly satisfied if he could clear out of it with half a million.

"Half a million!" I said, aghast. "Why, that will take a lot of making, Dillon."

"So it will, sir; but what's the odds so long as it's made?" he replied, with a smile.

"It's well to be you."

"Why, sir?"

"You are so sanguine and brimful of hope."

"Ah, well, sir, it's better to be that than to look on the black side of things and be always down in the dumps. It's enough to give one the blues, sometimes, to see the mugs fellows put on, and to hear the way they talk. Better be up in your luck than down."

"Why, you are turning quite a philosopher, Dillon; but you are quite right. Give me an optimist any day to a pessimist."

We Irish are accused of being over-sanguine in our temperament. Perhaps, indeed I may say we are; but give me a regiment such as this lad, with spirits unflagging and hopeful, that no wet blanket can damp the ardour of, in preference to a brigade of grumblers who growl at every thing, instead of putting up with little inconveniences and making the most of big ones.

It was 4.30 p.m. when we reached Semelale, where we remained for the night, riding on to No. 1 Signal Station in the morning. Lynch, a sturdy specimen of Colonial, is in charge here, and he and his two assistants are quite happy,

but also in want of ammunition. Their tent is at the foot of a hill, close to a huge baobab-tree, the trunk of which is hollow. Here they keep their kit and stores, and, in case of rain, take refuge inside, as there is room for three men to sleep.

The hill from which they signal is several hundred feet high, very rocky and steep, but there is a grand view all round for miles, which repays one for the stiff climb.

I was quite sorry to find myself back in Macloutsie, and the reaction to-day has been too awful. I feel quite unsettled, and, like a Jack-in-the-box, I cannot keep still.

I am pleased to say, however, that at last, after much expostulation verbal and written, I have had my way with Khama, or induced him to alter his mind about the waggons, and, in place of the Special, he has sent me Secheelua, one of his brothers, to order all Mangwato waggons into Mashonaland. With this object in view, I provided Secheelua with two ponies and packed him off to Tuli to arrange matters.

An up-country mail has just come in, but with no news, as usual, although I heard from Rand, Pennefather, and Mundell.

I have had an order, however, to send Morier and five prospectors up to the front, and very sorry I am to lose them. Also, ten men have been called upon to volunteer for F troop, and several good men whom I can ill afford to lose have given in their names. However, lose them I must, as I have no wish to prevent them getting up country.

The following message from Harris to Pennefather was heliographed on to Tuli, and confirms the rumour we heard that an alternative route to the east coast is to be opened up.

"Urgent. Your letters, 23rd August, 1890, to hand. Rhodes says it is useless to attempt opening *via* Tette or Zambesi. If you have the men, start making road *via* Pungwe Bay, but what is most important, and the first consideration, is to corduroy and make the present road as practicable as possible. Concentrate your energies on the bit between Tuli and Fort Victoria personally. Do not come round by the sea. We want you with the police, or, if you do return, come to Tuli *via* the Selous road. This road will be used by many, and, with the exception of the actual rivers, ought to be made good even during the rains. The Anglo-Portuguese agreement only permits of Pungwe route, and even that will take time."

Quite right to improve Selous road, but no time should be wasted in constructing the alternative route by Pungwe, as we must not lose sight of two facts: (1) The Matabele, (2) The impracticability, in the rains, of the many rivers that cut up Selous' road, over which communication will alone be possible by means of a flying bridge, or boats worked along a wire rope. This fact I have already pointed out to the Secretary!

Martin, an oldish man, who settled many years ago in Matabeleland, has come into camp from somewhere near Tati, with seventy-two native oxen for sale. They are small, but breedy-looking, cattle, and in prime condition for slaughter. Many of them are all black, with beautiful glossy coats. Martin is a dry old stick, and though we had a long talk together, I could get nothing out of him. Whether he found the fire-water of Macloutsie, which is distilled in Glasgow, and, doubtless, doctored in the Colony, too strong for him, I cannot say; but he evidently had an idea in his head that I was trying to get round him, so kept fencing with me the whole time, for he told someone in confidence, who promptly passed it on to me, "That he wasn't a goin' to be pumped, not if he know'd it!"

I have nothing further to add except that 111 natives have arrived from Khama to build our huts, so, in the course of a few weeks, when we move into them, we may expect a little more comfort than we have so far enjoyed!

CHAPTER X.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 14th to 30th September, 1890.

JUST think of it! Nothing less than a restaurant has been opened here by an individual calling himself Campbell, who bristles all over with energy and enterprise, as a porcupine does with quills. A very decent, obliging fellow he is, too, and, except for his name, it would be hard to detect his nationality.

The restaurant is merely an eating-house without a bar, and run on purely teetotal principles, so that a stranger expecting to find a Paradiso or Café Royal will meet with a sad disappointment. It is merely a fair-sized hut, the walls of which are mud, and the roof thatched with jungle grass, divided into two rooms. The smaller one for officers, and the larger, which will hold about thirty, for the men! The prices are very moderate, dinner in the former room being served at 3s. a head, and in the latter at 2s., while, for three meals a day, the charge is £7 a month.

Hop beer, a mawkish decoction, which is made up here in large quantities, and has quite put ginger pop in the shade, is much affected by the men, and is the strongest beverage obtainable publicly, though what may go on *sub rosa* it would be difficult even to conjecture.

The restaurant was formally opened some days ago, by a dinner given to my troop by E Troop of the B.B.P., as the wind-up of a cricket match in which the latter had been defeated; and, since then, some of us dined with Homan and got a most excellent dinner, the *menu* of which is below:

Soup.
Mock Turtle.
Fish.
Salmon Rissoles.
Poultry.
Fricassee of Chicken.

Joints.
 Roast Beef.
 Roast Mutton.
 Shoulder of Lamb and Mint Sauce.
 Corned Ox Tongue.
 Corned Beef.
Vegetables.
 Boiled Potatoes, Green Peas.
 Pumpkin.
Sweets.
 Jam Tart.
 Blanc Mange and Jam.
Cheese Straws.
Tea.

Not a bad dinner for a wilderness like this, was it, even though the soup, fish, and peas were tinned, and the potatoes and pumpkin had come all the way from the Transvaal?

So you see the effect of civilisation in the wilds is to commence invariably with the material. Creature comforts before everything else. And, after all, they are very essential as paving the way for mental culture, which thrives but indifferently on a poor appetite and weak digestion!

This place is growing in a small way, and it is quite curious to watch the bush clear, and in its place shanties spring up. Already we have two stores, a billiard saloon, a soda-water manufactory, an eating establishment, and two photographers, besides an odd loafer or two, and a floating population of transport riders.

The weaker sex is also beginning to put in an appearance, and Mr. Kretzmeier, the manager of the B.T.A. store, is ably assisted by his wife, who seems as much at home on the veldt as if she was in the centre of the metropolis. While Mrs. Sterne not only helps her husband to develop his artistic efforts in a dark-room that he has improvised, with much ingenuity, out of next to nothing, but looks after his inner man with a devotion as delectable as it is laudable. A country of surprises this, where necessity, of a verity, reigneth as Queen Mother of invention, sharpening the appetites of her needy subjects by keen wit and ready resource. In spite of the abuse hurled at the fair sex in general, after what I have seen of the few who are here, I cannot but express my admiration at certain sterling qualities they display in situations such as this, and the harder the conditions, the greater their fortitude. Mrs. Kretzmeier and Mrs. Sterne

simply look on the whole affair as a picnic, yet they have to put up with dreadful hardships, and go without many of the bare necessities of life. Surely women are wonderful, and devotion such as this ought to be expiation enough for even a host of failings.

The name of Sterne brings with it tender recollections of my younger and reading days, when *Tristram Shandy* was an especial favourite of mine; and an ass of gentle mien in the photographer's entourage, strikes in me a chord of sympathy that recalls vividly to my mind the old man's touching lament over his ass, while the wanderings of the marching Sub. and his family create in me a fellow feeling wondrous kind for these itinerant artists, who, with their little all in a donkey cart, are prepared to face anything and everything! Alas, for them, and alas, poor donkey. Ye shades of Lawrence Sterne protect them. Nomads of nowhere, and waifs of humanity, tossed hither and thither by the fierce storms of adversity, theirs has been anything but a sentimental journey; for, shorn of what is best in life, no tempering winds have comforted or caressed them. And so we

"Wag through the world,
Half the time on foot, and the other half walking:
And always as merry as a thunder storm in the night."

In what way a thunder storm is merry the poet sayeth not, and I cannot explain unless it is to clear the air of depression and elevate the spirits; for there can be no question that, even under the most trying circumstances, happiness is better than wisdom, and the flavour of even low comedy more appetising than the finest tragedy.

Turner and Dunne, who have been with us for two or three days, have returned to Tuli, I am very sorry to say. Thrown together as we are here, with little to enliven or exhilarate us, and nothing stimulating in the society around, we grow tired of one another, and new arrivals are only too welcome. In fact life here is simply stagnation. There is no interchange of improving thought, and our conversations consist merely of nothing but the same weary round of commonplaces, and the usual drivelling repetition of sport and shop, and shop and sport! Indeed, if it were not for the surrounding veldt, in which, in a few minutes, I can lose myself, oblivious of all else, except glorious Nature, with its beauty and fragrance, which I drink in all the more

eagerly because of its inspiriting freshness, I believe I should droop and decline from depression. And I must not forget my work, that part of it especially which, lying among the men and horses, is of most interest to me, for in these out-of-the-way corners occupation is man's salvation.

I have discovered, by the way, that Turner is a brother of poor Chamley Turner, of the 53rd, whom I knew in Egypt. The last I saw of him was at Suakim in 1884, at the stirring fight of Tamai, when his Camel Corps was converted temporarily into transport, for not many months after he was drowned in the Nile, poor fellow. Our man is not quite such a giant as his brother was, but he is tall and well-made, and about as charming a companion as one could wish to meet, like his brother, who was a splendid fellow. He is a very keen sportsman, an excellent rider and shot, in fact good all round, and though young, is certainly one of the finest fellows we have up here. He is a subaltern in the Royal Scots, but has been serving under Carrington in the B.B.P. for the past two years.

Dunne is also a boon companion, and a host in himself. A rollicking, jovial Irishman, he is as full of stories as infinity is of worlds and planets, or, to be nearer the mark, his anecdotes are as endless as infinity. Once he begins, out they come one after the other, and there is no holding him, or no inclination to, for his stories are generally amusing and always racy. He is certainly the handsomest man in this part of Africa, with eyes that most women would envy, and many rave about, melting at times into moods of infinite pathos that can conceal for a spell only the well of comicality and wit lying perdu behind, and he is full of fun and good temper. He has been out in South Africa for years, and does not seem to relish the idea of going home, simply because he has grown inured to a certain set of conditions that have become a second nature to him, so that the bare thought of a return to the old life is irksome. His career, which has been passed in conducting hunting and shooting expeditions into these very parts, as well as into Matabeleland, has been decidedly adventurous. During the time of the Stella land palavers, when a certain amount of friction existed between the Boers and ourselves, which culminated in Sir Charles Warren's expedition, Dunne was present, and took part in some of the raids that were then a common occurrence, when he came into contact with the redoubtable Dash-Smith. He has seen a great deal of the

Boers, and some of his descriptions of their domestic arrangements and interior economy, how they wear their clothes till they drop off, and go to bed with them on, are simply too killing ; also of his amours with elderly frauds and dark-eyed frauleins at the risk of getting a bullet into him, and the readiness of the latter to carry on a desperate flirtation with the handsome and amorous Irishman, because, as they told him, their young men were too ponderous and matter-of-fact, and didn't know what love was. I dare not reveal a modicum of what he told us, as it might, even now, get him into a serious scrape ; but although you have to take what he says with a pinch or two of salt, you are obliged to listen, and laugh at the way he tells it, and if he could only write as he talks, a book of his experiences would be really amusing.

His story of how he successfully amputated a man's leg with a butcher's knife, without placing him under chloroform, made us laugh all the more heartily because of his gravity when telling it ; and though no one believed him, he swears it is true !

Another he told me in confidence and in all seriousness. I must give an account of its startling originality, for this is the first that has ever been heard of it. There is nothing amusing or adventurous about it : it is but an unvarnished statement of a plain fact, and it is this very baldness which makes it all the more startling. Dunne assures me that Charles Lever never wrote one of the inimitable novels to which his name is affixed, and from which it would almost seem a sacrilege to disassociate his familiar name ; but he declares, that Lever's brother, who was curate to Dunne's father somewhere in Ireland, was the author, and as in those days it was not considered quite the thing for a parson to write books of a style so racy, they were published in the name of Charles Lever. But I said to him a fact such as this could not have been kept so dark, and was bound to have leaked out somehow or other.

"Not at all," he replied. "No one was in the swim except my father, who only found it out by accident, and has never divulged it to anyone except myself."

"And what about the publishers?"

"They hadn't an idea of it, and haven't even to this day."

"But by now you have told it to crowds of people, who must have repeated it until it was bound to get about."

"Ah ! but you see" (with a twinkle in his eye) "no one

believes me, and they think it pure fiction, but as a matter of fact, besides yourself, I have let only a few into the secret."

"Do you think me more gullible than the rest, then?"

"Not exactly" (with another twinkle); "but I know it's a fact that will interest you, and, believe me, it's genuine, and no lie this time, though some of my ventures, I must admit, are occasionally drawn from the long bow."

If this is true, as he asserts positively, it certainly has been the best-kept secret in the world, and one that must have been confined to members of the male sex only. I feel certain he is in earnest, and not taking a rise out of me, and yet I don't know what to think!

We have commenced building our huts at last; but even with plenty of supervision, it will be a slow job, I am afraid.

Tye, who was up here in June, but returned to Kimberley, has turned up again, but this time with an official position as our Senior Commissariat Officer. He has not been long acting on the idea which I put into his head on the previous occasion, that the Company should have its own Commissariat and Transport under an efficient officer, and has had the gumption to secure it for himself. He has had no experience of either, but that does not seem to matter in the least to Rutherford Harris, who is a bosom friend of his; so between them they have arranged it to their mutual satisfaction, no doubt.

Curiously enough, some time ago, in writing one of my weekly reports to the Secretary, I made a similar suggestion to him; but what strikes me as still more curious, however, is that transport is still to be hired anyhow and anywhere, and not even by contract. Tye seemingly is quite opposed to the Company having a train of its own; and all arrangements for securing supplies and transport, as well as paying for them, are left entirely to him.

A despatch from Pennefather for Rhodes, marked "Urgent," arrived here at 10.30 a.m. to-day, the 18th. It was from Fort Salisbury, and dated the 13th inst., so got through, about 430 miles, in five days, carried from post to post by different riders on separate horses. Very fair travelling, taking everything into consideration.

So far the column has accomplished its mission peacefully and successfully, and now we are all anxious to hear what the place is like—whether it is an El Dorado, that is going to fill our pockets with pounds of the precious and yellow metal, or only a barren expanse that is not worth the trouble and

expense that have been expended in getting to it. The sanguine ones are hopeful and expectant, and already many fortunes have been realized in anticipation : expectations, alas ! that are doomed to disappointment, and I hear that young Dillon's half million in prospective has gone up with a hop, skip, and a jump to a million !

I have been out shooting with Laurie for two days, but, except for a few birds, neither of us got anything. Indeed I saw next to nothing, and my luck in this direction seems simply cruel. I have enjoyed myself, however, and returned to camp invigorated and refreshed by exposure to sun and air, the real and only givers of life and health. There can be no doubt that, with ordinary precautions, it is impossible to have too much of the sun and fresh air of the veldt, and it is in these alone that the source and secret of health are hidden, and to them, pure and simple, must the magnificent physique of South Africans be attributed. And herein lies the nutshell of a splendid scheme, rather more expansive in its idea than General Booth's plan of a colony, to which I call his serious attention, and it is this. To collect all that he can lay hands on of the puny and even sickly children of our great towns, out of the slums and gutters, and from the byways and hedges, but not necessarily orphans only, place them in charge of really sensible and responsible people, and establish them on any part of the plateau that lies between Victoria and Salisbury, and stretching from the latter place into Manicaland. For a purpose such as this, I am sure large-minded Rhodes would only too readily concede him a large tract of land, and, in these young mites, General Booth would find, I am sure, a soil more congenial to work on than in the grown-up outcasts of humanity, confirmed in every vice ; and he would have the unusual satisfaction of knowing that both morally and physically he had been the means of rescuing scores of young lives from a cruel fate, and of having transformed the ceaseless grind of drudgery into a bright, healthy, and useful life.

Do you, by the way, believe in dreams ? I do to a great extent, though I can hardly explain myself ; yet there is in them that which we, with all our boasted science, cannot unravel ; and if we could but discover this missing link of connection between dreamland and reality, there is no telling, but the greater mystery of the unknown might become an easy matter. Last night I had a most vivid dream, and what do you think it was all about ? Simply of rain, the first time

in my life that I have ever dreamt of it. And it did come down, too ; not in mere torrents, but descending in one vast expanse of cloud, that dissolved into water as it touched the earth—a cloud through which the lightning tried to break, but failed. And the thunder was grand—simply the grandest I ever heard ; now like a concert of full-toned organs pealing, or a combination of clashing bells clanging furiously, then off into a crash, as of concentrated salvos of artillery, that died away in the distance into soft, but resonant echoes. It was all so vivid and life-like ; yet, what was it all about ? Nothing, or nightmare, you will say. Nothing perhaps—nightmare, no, positively no—disappointment certainly, for there has been no disturbance of any kind in the elements.

Dobson, who was in charge of one of the search parties after the B.B.P. deserter, has just returned empty-handed. I have been dining with him, and from his description he seems to have had a rattling time of it at Johannesburg and Pretoria. Much as I like many of the B.B.P., I am getting rather chary of going to their mess, for the amount of nonsense and tall talk that goes on is more than tedious, it is sickening, and even the simplicity of Blowitz requires to be taken with rather more than a soupçon of strong relish. What I most object to is, that the simplest statement cannot be made without flat contradiction, or a direct challenge as to its correctness being offered in the shape of an absurd bet.

Tye was also dining there, and eclipsed everybody in the sublimity and brilliancy of his bounce. Bluster, I should say, for bounce is too refined a word to use, of which our S.C.O. is a princely champion ! On this occasion, the argument, which effectually put a stop to any attempt at conversation, was about shooting, and after much wearisome wrangling and haggling, Tye and Hicks Beach are to shoot for £10 a side, in order to decide the momentous question as to which of them is the better shot. The match came off this morning at the B.B.P. range, and all of us were there to see Prince Bluster Fluster easily beaten by Hicks Beach as well as Laurie !

This afternoon Nesbitt and I walked down to the Matlapoola, to see how our garden is getting on. I started it some little time ago under Malherbe, and he seems to be making a very good job of it, and the seed of lettuce, onions, mustard, cress, and radishes have already come up, but what they need now is a little rain, as the ground is hardbake all over.

CHAPTER XI.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 18th May to 30th September, 1890.

I HAVE said very little to you about our men, not because I have nothing to say of them, or no wish to do so, but simply from the fact that I have had so much to discuss, and did not want to get behindhand.

On the contrary, they are to me a most interesting and a splendid lot, and speaking of my troop in particular, I find them as fine a set of fellows as I have ever worked with, men that one could go anywhere and do anything with. They are all hard-seasoned men in the prime of manhood, most of whom are Africanders, that have lived in the open Veldt all their lives, who can shoot straight, ride well, and keep their wits about them. What more could the most fastidious commander require? Men in whom I place the utmost reliance, and upon whom I could depend to get me out of a nasty corner, should it ever be my fate to drop into one. Among them is a slight sprinkling only of youngsters fresh from home, but they are quite lost among the seasoned old hands. In any case they are of the right sort, and as full of grit and dash as the men who rushed Quebec at the point of the bayonet, and carried San Sebastian by storm.

Their physique is magnificent, and if the shade of the great and departed Frederic could but see them, through the medium of a kindly Mahatma, he, or I suppose I ought to say it, would go into raptures over them. It is not so much their height, though they are almost giants, but the excellence of their proportions and condition, and the display of muscle and sinew, which is simply superb. A troop of gladiators, a glimpse at whose martial bearing and dare-devil appearance would have gladdened the eyes and heart of Imperial Rome.

But unfortunately as mounted infantry they are too tall and too heavy, and whoever enlisted them as such is much to

blame. I believe Carrington is the responsible party, as he raised the corps, though I expect he had little or no choice in the matter, and had to take all the men he could get.

Besides, the class of animals we have are too weedy and light for the men and the kind of work they have to do. The essence, to my mind, of mounted infantry consists in the selection of tough, medium-sized, active men, between nine and eleven stone in weight, who can ride and shoot, with wiry ponies from thirteen to fourteen hands in height to carry them. My varied experience in various parts of the world is, that ponies are far hardier and handier than horses. The same, in fact, applies to donkeys and mules under thirteen hands, camels and all animals; in fact, the smaller class usually being the hardiest. As there has seemingly been no choice in the selection of our men, riding camels ought to have been employed, and here, in my opinion, taking it all round, under every kind of varying circumstance and condition, we have the animal best fitted by Nature for the work—the two chief essentials in the employment of mounted infantry being (1) rapid locomotion, (2) with the least possible devitalisation, or, in other words, a saving of vital products, and less fatigue for the men, both conditions that are better carried out by the riding camel than any other animal; for it is far easier to ride a camel than a horse, and once you get accustomed to its peculiar see-saw motion, which is soon done, it is not nearly so tiresome in a long journey as a horse, as it is possible to vary the position so much more.—Of course the initial expense of importing them into South Africa and up here would be large, but in the end it would pay, as the deadly scourge, known only under the vague term of "horse sickness," commits great havoc among the poor horses. The more I see of the country, the more confirmed is my opinion that it is well suited for camels in every sense, botanically, climatically, and geologically, and I am convinced they would thrive well.

In addition to its rider, a camel will carry his kit, bedding, 200 rounds of Martini-Henry ammunition, or 400 of the new magazine rifle, from eight to ten days' rations, and if necessary, three or four days' grain rations for itself; and it will cover 400 or 500 miles, at the rate of 50 to 60 miles a day. Now what other animal in the world could do this? Of course, I have not discussed the question in all its merits, as to do so fully would take ever so many pages, and try your patience too much; so I will resume about the men.

The majority of my men, as I said before, have led an outdoor life, and are prospectors, farmers, and miners ; but, of course, trades of all sorts are represented ; and were we to start a Utopia of our own, the community would be self-supporting, with professors to instruct us, not only in the highest mental culture, but in the art called culinary ; while to clothe mind and body we have tailors with sporting instincts and fighting proclivities.

Many of them are Colonials, born of English, Scotch, and Irish parents, who came out and settled, some thirty or forty years ago, in Natal and the Cape ; and some few are men who came out as youngsters on their own hook. A goodly number are of Dutch and Huguenot (French) descent ; and the minority are recent arrivals from England and America, one man—a very fine specimen, too—hailing from the far-off city of the Golden Gate.

A mixed lot, you will say, but a splendid mixture, I can tell you—an earnest, in a small way, of what Greater Britain might do, if Imperial Federation were an accomplished fact. Don't think me too enthusiastic, for I mean what I say. Only imagine what a hotch-potch of humanity it is, and how Dickens and Thackeray would have revelled in the varied types, with their different peccadilloes and idiosyncrasies. Scotch caution and prudence, English *sangfroid* and doggedness, Irish geniality and impulse, Scotch phlegm and conservatism, French *verve* and excitability. Then divide these national traits and characteristics, if you prefer to call them so, into ever so many diverse and divergent peculiarities, according to the varying and variable individual temperaments composing them, and you can picture to yourself, better than I can describe, the varied personalities that I have to deal with.

"But, oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

I can assure you, however, that never have I found a more hard-working, willing, and easier set of men to deal with ; and since I removed the disturbing element, things have moved as smoothly as quicksilver does over a level surface.

The best man out-and-away that I have among the home-born is young Morier, a son of our ambassador in Russia, and himself in the Diplomatic Service, but impelled by a spirit of adventure to join us ; and the way he rolls up his sleeves, and grooms his horse, or performs any work that he is called

upon to do, is an example in itself, and proof that a gentleman can make a good soldier. He is enormously big—over six feet four inches in height, and weighing close on twenty stone—and there is no horse in the troop that can carry him; but he makes himself generally useful, and I have already promoted him to corporal, because he has lots of influence with the men, yet is a great favourite, as he has such an excellent way with them.

The men are all really so good, that it seems invidious to draw any comparisons between them; but there are just a few who are the pick of the bunch, that would go to the devil with me or for me, and for whom no forlorn hope could be forlorn enough. Their names are Hackwell, Divine, Reed, Fitzgerald, and Van Dyk.

They are all Colonials, the first two mentioned of English, Reed of Scotch, Fitzgerald of Irish, and the last of Dutch descent. All of them, except Divine, who is about five feet ten inches, are six feet and over, with spare, sinewy frames that would stand anything, and hearts that would dare everything—all heart, in fact. Hackwell is cool and quiet; Reed the same, with caution added; Van Dyk phlegmatic, but high-spirited; while Divine—more like an Irishman—and Fitzgerald are fiery, impulsive, yet full of initiative.

But I have forgotten to mention Robinson, the Californian, who though quiet in manner, has a grim determination and a set look about his face, that, in addition to what I know of him as a man ready and full of resource, stamps him as an awkward customer to tackle in a tight corner.

The following story, which I can vouch for as true, will give you some idea of the man. During the enrolment of the troop at Mafeking, Robinson—overdressed, beringed, and bejewelled—offered himself, and was accepted. The men, on this account, got a notion into their heads that he was a fop and a milksop, and treated him accordingly; an idea that Robinson fostered, by giving out that he was a photographer. One day, H—, a fiery young Colonial, got into an altercation with him, and called him a Yankee hog. Robinson, eyeing him calmly, retorted, "Waal, if I am a Yankee hog, yew are nothing less than an Afrikander dog." Whether H— foresaw an easy victory or not, I cannot say; but he challenged the Californian to come outside and fight. This Robinson declined to do. "You abused me first," said he; "say, if you apologise to me, I'll apologise to you."

H——, however, refused his offer with scorn, and repeated his challenge. A second time the Californian replied, "Apologise to me, and I'll apologise to you." But H——, now quite furious, grew more abusive. "I'll take no apology; you must fight." R. "I have no wish to fight." H. "You're a coward, then"; and taking off his coat, he squared up to Robinson. By this time they were behind the tent, surrounded by a small crowd, who had been attracted by the prospect of a little fun. Robinson, without removing his coat, threw himself into a careless attitude of defence, saying, "All right; as you will have it, look out for yourself." And in a few seconds, H—— was stretched on the ground, half-insensible from a left and right-hander. It transpired afterwards that Robinson had fought five rounds with Sullivan in his palmy days. Needless to say, the men look on him now in quite a different light.

Of course, it is at present difficult to give an opinion on the merits of Colonials as soldiers, as so far my experience of them has been practically *nil*; but my first impressions of them are very favourable, and I see no reason to disparage them, as I have heard some men do; and for my part, I fail to see any distinction between them and home-born. On the contrary, as far as I can see, they are as good material, and infinitely better adapted for the work we have in hand even than men who have been quartered in the colony for some time. As to the men of Dutch lineage, I cannot as yet give you a very good picture of them—only an instantaneous negative. Those who hail from Natal, and from the southern and eastern provinces, seem to be of a better description, and of a greater intelligence and higher civilisation; while those who come from the larger towns, such as Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, &c., are not to be distinguished from English Colonials; indeed, in some instances, they strike me as far superior.

They excel in all field games, and quite hold their own against the average home-born in cricket and football, especially when educated in England, as many of them are. One football match we had here—Home-born *v.* Colonials —was a draw, but in favour of the latter, who were heavier and in better condition, I consider, because the former were acting on the defensive nearly all the time, and some of the best players on both sides were Colonials, notably the brothers Van der Byl, of Cape Town, one of them a handsome

young giant, and Judge of Kimberley. The greatest excitement prevailed before and during the match, which was most stubbornly contested, and though the feeling on both sides ran high, no vice or bad temper was displayed, the effect of the result not only creating relief, but mutual respect all round.

As far as my short experience goes, the Dutch-born—I am speaking almost exclusively of the so-called Boer of the Transvaal and Orange Free State—are phlegmatic to a degree, and intensely conservative, looking on life with supreme indifference—*i.e.* what we call life in the ordinary acceptation of the term—ignoring its pleasures and frivolities with undisguised contempt (even shooting, their sole pastime, being taken seriously either as an actual necessity for food supplies, or as a profitable business investment), while they convert its realities into a religion of extreme fanaticism.

They eat because they have to; drink when they get the chance, but will not go out of their way to; smoke as they have little else to do; shoot only when obliged to; and make love because it is an unavoidable evil, or the chink of £ s. d. is in it; are satisfied with little, yet nothing comes amiss to them, then will take all they can get. Their faith in the Lord is unlimited, and second only to their confidence in themselves. He is their Universal Provider, delivering everyone and everything into their hands through the Bible, which is his medium and text-book. On it and in the name of the Lord they swear, the effect being miraculous in transforming fiction to truth. They have no confidence in anyone else, while they look on Englishmen with suspicion, and even hate. No wonder, too, if we but consider the divergency between our mutual views and pursuits, no two extremes being more unlike than the Boers and ourselves; and also taking into serious consideration the fact that, although from the very beginning all they have ever asked, and still ask for, is to be left alone in peace and quietness, they have never obtained, nor does it look as if they ever will, if we can judge correctly by the shadows seemingly cast by coming events.

There can be little doubt that the Boers are thorough and sincere in their convictions, a sincerity which, I think, must in a great measure account for their general gravity and heaviness of demeanour; while their fanaticism is so overdone that hypocrisy is the result, an outcome simply of the fusion of two extremes. For who will deny that the Bible of the Boers

is a convenient house of refuge, which covers a multitude of sins, just as our own does?

Though our antithesis in most things, in some respects the Boers and ourselves are of a very similar temperament, only they are three hundred years behind the times, and nearly on a level with the close-cropped, bigoted Roundheads. I have heard them described as stubborn and obstinate, but they do not strike me as any more so than we are. Strong-willed and determined, they like their own way best, and take it—small blame to them; and just as we do ourselves, and like us, they are a stiff-necked race, with a marked tenacity of purpose and other characteristics, very similar to the Jews of old; and if we are one of the ten lost tribes, they are another.

Their conservatism and prejudices are deep-rooted, and the elders are opposed to reform in any form, though the younger are not quite so averse to it; but sooner than give up living in the same old groove in which their ancestors before them have lived, they would fight to the death.

Extraordinary density and infatuation, we say; extreme devotion and loyalty, they respond. Merely a difference of opinion, or a conflict of views, that only the future can decide!

With a rifle in his hand, a horse beside him, and cover in front of him, the Boer has no equal, certainly no superior; but they do not relish cold steel or coming to close quarters, so I am informed by those who know them intimately, and you can take the following anecdotes for what they are worth:

When the corps was being raised at Mafeking, some of the men were drinking at Isaac's store, among the number being Hendrik, a tall, powerful Boer, who commenced boasting about having killed five Rednecks, as they call our soldiers, at Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill. One of the other troopers, fresh out from home, was so incensed on hearing him, that he advised him for the future to keep such remarks to himself when in the presence of Englishmen. Hendrik's reply to this was so insulting, however, that the Englishman, who was much smaller and lighter, promptly knocked him down, but without saying another word, he picked himself up and slunk out of the room. This man was in my troop until the column moved forward, when he and four others, three of them Dutchmen and one German, were discharged, because they seemed reluctant to go on. Evidently men who were not to be trusted, and Hendrik, as far as I knew of him, was a shady customer!

The other case occurred quite recently. M——, a huge Boer, standing over 6 ft. 4 in. and weighing about eighteen stone, and H——l, a Colonial, under six feet but strongly built, were with a waggon that was being driven by the former. One of the team, a regular schilm with an evil eye, was not pulling, so M—— struck it severely with the whip. H——l remonstrated with him very quietly, and told him that he thought the brute was sick. M——, however, went on flogging it all the more savagely, as he said "This is the way I treat all verdomd Roineks." H——l, losing his temper, promptly went for the Boer, as he replied "This is the way I intend treating you," and in five minutes the great creature was begging for mercy. But I think Rider Haggard, who knows the Boers better than most people, bears out this statement to some extent in the *Witches' Head*, when he describes the fight that took place at Maritzburg between Jeffries and a giant of a Boer.

Of course, I have not as yet been in the Transvaal, and have had only a small experience of them, so you must make allowances for me. Still, I speak from an impression of those I have seen, without favour and prejudice. Indeed, I have in my dealings always found them very quiet and law-abiding, and those who are under me as troopers are very orderly and amenable to discipline.

CHAPTER XII.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 1st October to 27th October, 1890.

THE weather has been extremely hot of late, and to-day the thermometer registered 114° in the shade.

I have some men down with fever in hospital, and have been up to see them. Vizard, our paymaster-sergeant, has had a very bad bout, I am sorry to say, but he is ever so much better now, and King and White, who have also had a touch, are nearly well again. After chatting with each of them in turn, I went in with Veitch, the doctor, to pay Elphinstone a visit. He has not been up in these parts for more than three months, yet, off and on, has been suffering from dysentery all the time, and, although a well-built man, is looking very much pulled down. He is excessively nice, and much liked by everybody. We found him very cheery, however, and had a long talk with him, which left him all the brighter when we came away.

A big storm passed over the camp last night, a dry one, however, without a drop of rain, but the lightning was very vivid and the thunder extremely loud. Can my dream the other night have had anything to say to it, or had it aught to do with my dream?

An up-country mail has just come in, and brought me a long letter from Pennefather. The first unofficial of any interest, or containing information regarding the resources and capabilities of the country, that I have received so far. Without gushing he speaks well of it, and, from his description, the plateau lying between Victoria and Salisbury must be a grand country. Their present location is not at Mount Hampden, but some miles south of it. It has been named in honour of Lord Salisbury, and to better emphasise the fact of our having taken formal possession, a general parade was held on the 14th, and the Union Jack hoisted and saluted.

The heat still continues, although the sky has been very clouded and it has been trying hard to rain for the past few days, and yesterday a few runaway drops that must have escaped from one of the lower clouds and fallen by accident might have been easily counted on the thirsty dust beneath; while to-day the wind has veered all round and boxed the compass from every point, but without inducing even a fugitive tear to drop. Denison, of the Pioneers, passed through here, bringing with him a remarkably nice mare belonging to us, which he found grazing close to the Marapong drift. It had evidently been lost by one of the parties with horses on their way up, and, in spite of the bareness and dryness of the veldt, she is in excellent condition.

Bruce and Knight have gone to Pilapwie on duty, and, as we have little doing now, I have started a few of the men who understand mining on a well in the middle of the camp, to see if water is obtainable, and at what depth.

I have just returned from hospital, and found my patients flourishing under the careful nursing of the sisters, to whom I paid my respects. Here I met Father Prestige, and he tells me that he had a letter yesterday from Sam Edwards at Tati, who writes that Lobengula, with Major Maxwell's and Mr. Moffatt's approval, is sending a Mr. Dawson (?) to Mashonaland to look after his interests, as well as to claim a gold-mining concession for himself. If this is true, it is suggestive, and may be the thin end of the wedge and the sowing the seed of future trouble. For if Lobengula gets a footing in the country he will send in his men to work his properties, with complications and disturbances in consequence. Since writing this I have been thinking the matter over, and, on second thoughts, have come to the conclusion that Lobengula is much too crafty ever to go against us of his own free will, or if he can possibly avoid doing so. Champagne, concessions, and civilisation go together. He likes the former, and is clever enough to see the advantages of the latter. In fact, he is civilised enough to try his hand at floating companies. Quite the monarch, granting concessions *holus bolus*.

Pemberton, another of the search wallahs, has come back to-day, having thoroughly enjoyed his trip, but minus the deserter, who must be laughing up his sleeve at the futile attempt of the B.B.P. to catch him, and who no doubt is having a good time on the proceeds of his little misadventure with Grey's effects.

The weather for the last four days has been simply perfect, but a mystery to me, though after the heat of the past month it has been a Godsend, while the cool breeze and sharp bracing feeling in the air is simply delicious. But whence the cause at this time of the year? The wind is from the same quarter, the east, as it has all along been, unless rain has been falling on the high ground in the Transvaal, eastward from here, to account for it. In that case the cold will not last much longer, as to-day was decidedly warmer, so in a day or two we may expect the heat again.

A helio came through from Pilapwie to-day for the first time for weeks, and one was also received from Tuli, after several days' cessation, due to the prevailing haze.

Special despatches from Harris for Colquhoun and Jameson were brought in by White, and I sent them on by Whitehead and Davis to Semelale. I have more than once pointed out to Harris that our horses are being overworked on this despatch riding business between here and the telegraph terminus, which is now not far off Pilapwie, but he says that Rhodes' orders on the subject are imperative, and it must be done even at the expense of horseflesh. I must confess I cannot see the necessity for such recklessness, or what difference a few hours, or a day, would make in forwarding these so-called urgent messages. Where does the urgency come in, I should like to know?

I have forgotten to mention that information has reached us that Sir Henry Loch and Mr. Rhodes are to pay us a visit before long; in fact they are already on their way up here. Not only will it be a change for us, seeing new faces and hearing fresh ideas, but for my part I am pleased in having the opportunity of making the acquaintance of two men of whom I have heard such a lot, and I am therefore eagerly looking forward to their arrival. Not only will it give me fresh material to write about, but a completely new diet of thought and reflection; for with all the work I have at present I find little time and less inclination to read, though a study of human atoms never fails to interest me. And, to my thinking, men of marked individuality are better reading than any book, for like the trees, brooks, and stones of Nature, they have books, tongues, and sermons replete with the knowledge that improves, and the magnetism that elevates. And if Rhodes is only half the personality he is painted, a study of him ought to be worth a library of books!

I know that few books written ever interested me half so much as the conversations I had some years ago (in 1886) with Sir James Butler, who was then in command at Wady Halfa. Lady Butler (*nee* Elizabeth Thompson) and himself were living in a "dahabeeah," the saloon of which was adorned, in more than a double sense, by the striking personalities of herself and husband, as well as by a number of lovely little masterpieces of her art, depicting scenes and views of the Nile. A "dahabeeah," let me tell you, is a native-built craft, very like a Thames house-boat in its interior arrangements, divided into cabins, sleeping berths, etc., and, like them, varying in size; the finest one that I ever saw when out in Egypt belonging to Nubar Pasha, who was at the time Prime Minister to Tewfik Pasha. In shape, however, they differ entirely, being built on the principle of a Roman galley, with sharp, low prows and high heavy sterns, the weight behind enabling them to stem more easily the tremendous current of the river. Evidently one of the few remaining relics left behind them by the Romans.

Both mentally and physically Sir James Butler is a splendid man, and the most brilliant conversationalist I have ever met. Without any effort or constraint, and as naturally as possible, he would converse on any subject, no topic coming amiss to him, in language that would have graced the most elegant diction, and in a stream of eloquence that can alone be likened to the flow of the mighty river which is ever sweeping silently onward to the sea. Words that left on me something more lasting than mere temporary impressions, pleasant for the time being only; flowers of a refined and highly cultured mind that may possibly have withered, yet not without leaving behind them a memory of a beautifully imaginative imagery and bright colouring, mingling with a faint but delicious fragrance that will never fade!

Doyle, restless and indefatigable as ever, has returned from Kimberley and gone on to Tuli, and this time he has brought with him a younger brother of Rutherford Harris. This incessant travelling of Doyle's in a Cape cart has set me thinking, What a splendid nervous system the man must have, to stand the continuity of strain and the incessant shocks it has been subjected to for the past few months! Or can it be that it is only imperfectly developed, or yet again an utter absence of nerves? Let me call the attention of the faculty to the fact, and let me recommend them to send their super-

sensitive, hyper-nervous, and hysterical cases for a jaunt in a Scotch cart up to Victoria and back. If the bumping, thumping, jolting, and jumping in general, and the all-round racketing in particular, will not cure them, nothing will, and their cases are hopeless! I am not joking, or even attempting to. I neither deal wholesale in superior chaff at so much a ton, nor yet do I retail it at a few shillings the hundredweight. I am in downright earnest, and never felt so serious in all my life, let me tell you, and, as I remarked in my previous scrawl, the glorious sun that shines, and the fragrant air that blows on the South African veldt, combine in producing about the finest specimens of physical humanity it is possible to see on the earth's surface, in point of powerful frames, sound constitutions, splendid stamina, and last, but not least, nerves of steel.

As for the mental standard, I cannot at present say much, but it is simply a matter of time and education; and, living as the Colonials do, with the beauties of Nature all round them, and Nature at her best, too, breathing in pure air, and inhaling life-inspiring light, the culture of the mind will soon come, especially with such splendid physical material to work on. And yet, I regret to say, from what I have seen of them, their appreciation of Nature is not at all what it should be, which is a decided drawback to their mental development. This is more than a Chinese puzzle to me, for how anyone can live in Nature as they do, without revelling in it, even to a state of intoxication, is beyond my comprehension.

At last we have had a little rain—three showers in the past four days, the third lasting an hour—but though it has merely licked up the dust, which lies thick in the camp and its immediate vicinity, it has freshened us up a bit, and we are thankful for even a modicum of mercy.

“How beautiful is the rain,
After the dust and heat,”

and how refreshing after a long spell without it.

These showers, I imagine, have to do with the new moon, and can hardly be looked on as even a preliminary to the rainy season, which Father Prestige tells me cannot be expected until the 15th of next month, or perhaps not until the end of December, as the climate here is gloriously uncertain and irregular, and, according to him, it is usual to have, at least, two months of dull, cloudy weather, such as we have been having, as a kind of harbinger to the rains. The grass, which

in many parts of the veldt has been burnt by the natives, a yearly custom of theirs, is not so forward as it might be after the recent sprinkling, which has, however, brought out the flies, who are rather more so than we care for, but not so bad as we found them either at Candahar or in Egypt, though quite bad enough all the same. Do you remember our meals in the former place, how they degenerated into helter-skelters and handicaps between the flies and ourselves, sometimes ending in dead heats, but more frequently in walks over for the disgusting little brutes? and do you recollect the fiendish atrocities we used to perpetrate on them, with the only appreciable and tantalising result of increasing instead of diminishing them? Of the Egyptian horror I have the liveliest recollection, as you know, considering I was shut up in a dark room for several weeks, and nearly lost my left eye from acute ophthalmia, communicated to me by a more than ordinarily offensive member of an aggressive fraternity. Thank heaven for the purity of our surroundings here, which shields us from everything but being annoyed and bitten, sometimes so sharply as to draw blood.

Campbell, who was a corporal in C Troop, but is now clerk to Colquhoun, arrived with important despatches for Rhodes and Harris, having ridden through on the post-horses in eight days. After a day's rest he has gone on to Pilapwie on two fresh horses that I gave him. I gleaned little from him beyond a rough sketch of the road up. After marching about 200 miles beyond Tuli in a north-easterly direction, and somewhere about 40 miles beyond the Lundi River, and a few miles north of Providence Pass, C Troop was left here to built a fort, to be called Victoria.

The country between Tuli and Victoria is very difficult. Extremely hilly, broken, and wooded, also intersected by numerous rivers, with plenty of water in them. This remark is not quite so absurd as you might imagine, because, in the dry season, African rivers, more often than not, follow suit, and all that marks a stream is a dry bed of sand, with here and there a pool of water in it.

The column then resumed its march, now more or less due north, and Mount Wetza, about 100 miles from Victoria, was the next point reached. Here, as the ground in the vicinity is swampy and boggy, the column deviated a few miles to the west, where a fort called Charter has been since erected by A Troop, under Heyman, who were dropped here. Between

Victoria and Charter, and also on to Salisbury, the natural features undergo a complete change, the country opening out into a table-land, at an elevation of 4000 ft. and over. It is undulating and grassy, with clumps of bushes and trees scattered about. After leaving Charter the column, consisting only of B Troop and the Pioneers, kept along in the same northerly direction until they got to Salisbury on the 12th of September.

Nothing but despatches have been coming in to-day. Two for Colquhoun, one for Pennefather, and one for Jameson, were brought in by a runner in the early morning; and before midday two more for Colquhoun, and another for Pennefather, came in by post-cart, and I have sent them on by the same conveyance that has taken Hannay and Homan on to Tuli.

Willoughby arrived by post-cart from Tuli, and rode on to Pilapwie in the evening on his way home. He gave us no news. My introduction of him to Harford, who is very deaf, poor fellow, was rather amusing. Just as I was doing so, I said to him in a whisper, which was scarcely audible, "You must speak loud, as he's very deaf, and won't hear you." To my intense astonishment, and Willoughby's evident amusement, Harford, who, as a rule, has to be shouted to, responded very curtly, "No, I'm not." So to cover my retreat I rapidly changed the subject into another channel.

Craven, a friend of Wallace's, who was extremely kind to me on the voyage out, as well as at Kimberley, came by post-cart with a letter of introduction to me. I did all I could for him in the way of lunch, and a blanket that he was in want of, and sent him on the same afternoon to Tuli in the post-cart, as he seemed anxious to get on.

Our garden, thanks to Malherbe's untiring exertions, has, at length, brought forth fruit—or rather, I should say, mustard, cress, and radishes, which we have devoured with a relish that the sauce of necessity can alone give.

Even in this haunt of savages and wild animals we have one of the survivors of the Light Brigade in the person of Quartermaster-Sergeant Hillier, who also served in the Indian Mutiny and other campaigns (for which he has seven or eight medals), and who, like a brave old war-horse, is ready for another.

As this is the anniversary of that wild, but glorious, charge, in which the old man took part, I sent for him after dinner, and all of us congratulated him, and drank his health in Pommery and Greno.

We then adjourned to a camp fire, where, after some songs, patriotic, sentimental, and comic, I spoke a few words to the men in honour of the occasion, and proposed, first, the health of "Her Gracious Majesty the Queen," then "The Prince of Wales and Royal Family," finally "Hillier," each toast being received with ringing cheers. The men then quite spontaneously burst into "For he's a jolly good fellow," which was followed by "God bless the Prince of Wales," and terminated by "God save the Queen."

The Governor, who was expected to-day, did not turn up, but a Mr. McArthur, who dined with us this evening, and who has travelled all over Manica, Gaza, and Mashonaland, prospecting for a syndicate, says it is a fine country, fruit being plentiful along the Boosi and Sabi rivers. Nothing further to record, except that we moved into our huts yesterday, and are trying to make them as comfortable as we possibly can. Already we find them a decided improvement on our ragged bell-tents, but I very much doubt if they will be waterproof during the wet season !

CHAPTER XIII.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 28th October to 1st November, 1890.

I THINK I have more than once drawn your attention to the beautiful aspect in which we live, and move, and have our being—an aspect that exercises a most wholesome effect on our physical qualities, and that would have a like effect on our mental, if we only gave it the chance; but at every risk I must try to describe the sunset and after-glow we had last evening.

I say try advisedly, for is not Nature quite impossible, and what is Art, after all, but mere imitation, or if inspiration, as some of us think, what is it but an inspiration from Nature herself, the source and fountain-head of all, and only Nature second-hand? And even if the brush of a Turner, or the pen of a Ruskin, have given us results, beautiful and artistic in themselves, no doubt, in comparison to the great original they are but mere daubs.

After this you will think it terrible presumption on my part even to attempt a description; but I am only about to give you my impression of what I saw, and I warn you beforehand that it will be only a smudge!

This country is, *par excellence*, the land of extraordinary sun effects, and the scenery of the sky, morning and evening, is simply and supremely splendid, the variety and brilliancy of colouring in the after-glowes being gorgeous beyond imagination. For some days past we have been treated to sunsets and sunrises of unusual splendour, but the one I speak of was the most stormy and superb I have ever seen. The evening previous it had been dazzling and brilliant; but last night, in spite of the absence of nearly all colouring, it was of a Titanic magnificence, defying all descriptive effort.

I was out riding on Punch, several miles from camp, when I became cognisant of the fact that in place of the beautiful

blue vault, dotted all over with fleecy creations, which had been over me when I started, black, threatening masses of clouds from all four corners of the compass had banked themselves one upon the other, as if about to dissolve into a second deluge that promised to sweep our puny earth into the unknown abyss of endless infinity, while the lightning, forked and fiery, ran across them, as if in angry menace of things to come!

It was a gloriously wild scene, the grandest and wildest I have ever looked on! Suddenly the shadows of evening began to fall and deepen as twilight faded into eternity, and the gloom of night crept on apace, covering us with a mantle of darkness blacker in intensity than the storm that had been impending, all traces of which had vanished in less than an hour. Then the soft moon shone out brightly, and the glorious evening star, lone and lovely in the bleakness around, smiled upon us in silent contemplation, and as if in commiseration of our future fate. But only for a spell. Soon the sky was clear, and studded all over with stars, like a sun-shower of golden sparks sparkling merrily, as they alone know how to in the regions shone down upon by the Southern Cross. A transformation with a vengeance.

But now to things mundane. The bugle has just sounded the dinner-call, and I must be off to mess. And so we pass from the sublime to the ridiculous! Dinner is over, and I have an hour to spare before turning in, so will jot down the occurrences of an eventful day in the history of the Protectorate, and for that matter of South Africa.

This is not going to be a political effusion, but merely a casual allusion to things political, not because I am no politician, nor yet political economist, but for the simple reason that from certain motives of policy, I neither make nor meddle with things that do not concern me. A reason, however, that in no way prevents me from observing what is going on, or of thinking on the controlling whys and wherefores!

The question is, What has brought the High Commissioner up here? That he has not come merely to see the country goes almost without saying; on the other hand, that he has come simply to see Lobengula, is, I think, also out of the question. Yet an idea seems to prevail that the Matabele monarch was to have met Sir Henry either on the borders of his own country, or in the debatable strip known as the

disputed territory, which lies between the Macloutsie and Shashi Rivers, but that his chief Indunas and regiments would not let him. This, however, is absurd on the face of it. In the first place it would be against Loben's dignity to leave Buluwayo; and secondly, it would be opposed to their traditions, so that it has not so much to do with the opposition of his people, who, like all savages, are naturally superstitious and suspicious, and who would therefore, in any case, resent his leaving, and, of course, it would never do for Sir Henry to go to Buluwayo. Whence the object of his visit, then?

My own impression is, that he is here with the ostensible motive of seeing for himself the capabilities of the territory over which his power extends, as befitting the duty of an active and intelligent ruler, but that, underlying this superficial reason, his visit has a distinctly political significance. Unmistakably significant in a political sense. Not because he is here in his capacity of Governor of Cape Colony, so much as in his position of High Commissioner, an office which makes him responsible for Imperial interests. And that the Premier of the Colony and the Managing Director of the Chartered Co. is with him, is a fact which speaks for itself, I think, in shewing that Imperial policy is in favour of extension and advancement, by giving it moral support, or, to say the least of it, that a tacit understanding exists between the Government and the Company. While the presence of two prominent members of the Bond and M.L.A.'s, in Rhodes' company, suggests that at all events a section of the Bond are favourable to his northern policy.

It was a perfectly lovely morning, with a bright blue sky, clear, sharp air, and pleasant breeze, when I marched the troop, consisting of 3 officers, 5 sergeants, 49 rank and file, over to the fort end of the B.B.P. lines, and formed them up as a guard of honour for the Governor.

Beautifully sized, they looked a splendid lot in their serviceable kit, and smasher hats, looped up on one side by a silver badge, which shewed marked signs of wear and tear, that made them appear all the fitter and more ship-shape.

It was exactly 10 a.m. when Sir Henry and party arrived, the former riding, the latter in a large break, among them being Lord Elphinstone, Sir Sidney Shippard, Sir Graham Bower, Major Sapte, and a son of the Governor's, with his tutor.

Having inspected the guard, Sir Henry shook hands with me, and said how very pleased he was at their fine appearance

and smart turn-out ; and, telling us to march off, he and his party went across to the B.B.P. lines, to the huts that had been made ready for them. Rhodes and his Dutch friends I did not see until 3.30 p.m., when we sat down to a most sumptuous lunch, given by the B.B.P., in the large room at Campbell's restaurant. The energetic proprietor had apparently taxed all his wit and resources to provide delicacies of all kinds, and had succeeded very well, too ; for a stranger partaking of it would have imbibed the idea that we lived in the lap of luxury, in a land surfeited with flesh-pots and deluged by wine. Grey sat at the head of the table, with Sir Henry on his right, and next to him Mr. Rhodes, Lord Elphinstone to his left, then myself and Sir Sidney Shippard ; so that I was exactly opposite to Rhodes, to whom I was formally introduced.

My first impression of him is not at all favourable, and I must confess to a feeling of genuine disappointment, after what I have heard of him. What I expected to see I cannot quite say, nor can I tell you exactly the kind of ideal my imagination has conjured up. Indeed, I am not conscious of having ever pictured one to myself, except perhaps a sort of shadowy embodiment of restless energy and fiery temperament ; instead of which, what I saw was a substantial organism, slow in his movements, deliberate in his manner, and phlegmatic in his temperament. A big, heavy-looking, carelessly-dressed man, not unlike a Dutch farmer, with an awkward, slouching figure, and a dull, rather expressionless face, who talks in a curious, dreamy way, as if he was half asleep, and was taking no interest in what he was saying, but was thinking of something totally different.

Lord Elphinstone and Sir Sidney Shippard I found most interesting and entertaining company, talking to them on various topics ; but with Rhodes I made no headway, and my conclusion is that his admirers have overrated him, or it may be that he is a man who on no account is to be judged by external appearances, which, in him, are very probably misleading and deceptive ; for an estimate so formed, merely on a first impression, would, if public opinion speaks true, be utterly erroneous !

In the evening some of the B.B.P. and myself dined with Sir Henry. Sir Graham Bower, the Imperial Secretary, was absent, as he was poorly. I sat next to Sapte, whom I last met in the Hotel des Bains at Ismailia, in 1883, when he was

in the 35th Foot. Time passed pleasantly in raking up old reminiscences and making mental notes, and I came away with the feeling that Sir Henry Loch is the very *beau ideal* of a Governor and an English gentleman. His dignified presence, commanding figure, and fine, intelligent face, cannot fail to leave a good impression that a ready courtesy and charm of manner greatly enhance !

It disgusted me immensely to hear one or two speak of him as mean and stingy, because he had not given them enough champagne to drink on the way up. Rather a low and curious standard to judge by, and I only mention it because one of them ought to have known better, and to give you an idea of the various specimens of humanity we have up here. But I am not astonished. It is but a chapter from the book of an intense national snobbishness, and an effervescence of mushroom growth, to measure men by the wine they drink and the cigars they smoke. In itself an excellent critique of the genus, more biting in its sarcasm and sweeping in its condemnation than any outside criticism. For my part, I fail to see why private, or public funds for the matter of that, ought to be taxed, so that a set of loafers and hangers-on should guzzle expensive wine !

There was quite a keen wintry feel in the air this morning (29th) when I took my usual early stroll. Rhodes came over after breakfast, and I had a long talk with him, or, rather, I tried to force conversation, as he did not appear to be communicative.

At 11.30 a.m. Sir Henry inspected the men, and made them a little speech. He told them he was very much struck by their splendid appearance, and, under the circumstances, their exceedingly smart turn-out ; and he complimented them for all the work that had been done in so comparatively short a space of time, as well as for the excellent fellowship that had existed between the B.B.P. and themselves. Then he went on to say that, if complications were to arise that would bring on a collision with Lobengula, on us here would fall the brunt of the fighting. Now, with all due deference to H. E., it seems to me far more likely, certainly more feasible, that Charter, Victoria, and Salisbury would be attacked before us, and by different impis simultaneously. First of all because the distance between them is enough to make isolation practicable. Secondly, the Pioneers having scattered all over the country prospecting would be an extra inducement,

Thirdly, the dissemination of our police force, and consequent weakness of garrisons, a fact well known to the Matabele, whose intelligence department is better than our own. Fourthly, while here we have four troops and a strength of over 300 men, with Khama at our backs, and in easy reach of reinforcements. Evidently it is but a *façon de parler* on Sir Henry's part to keep us in good humour, as I cannot imagine that he is in earnest ; or a mere blind, perhaps, though I see no object in this, as there is no disquieting rumour afloat, and all is quiet.

When the men had been dismissed, Sir Henry went round the camp and into all the huts, expressing himself greatly pleased with the tidiness and cleanliness that prevailed. After he had gone away, I made several attempts to get into conversation with Rhodes, who hung about our camp all day, ostensibly much interested in my—well, in reality, taking stock of everyone and everything all round, myself included. But our conversations were only of trivial commonplaces, for either he would not or I could not get him to talk, and I think even his most ardent admirers must admit that he is by no means a brilliant conversationalist.

Yet, though the conclusion I arrived at yesterday was perhaps too rapid, and therefore incorrect, as all hasty jumped-at conclusions are apt to be, and though my first introduction to the African Colossus did not impress me favourably, I am already beginning to alter my mind, and to think that he is very deep. For under that dull exterior, which is but a mask, he is continually taking in all around and about him, in a double sense, too, of men, matter, and material, and in him certainly the outward man is no criterion of the inner. Whether he is an actor or not, and whether he tries to pose as a fool, and in doing so makes himself look a bigger fool than he is, he certainly is not the fool he would wish people to believe him. The fact is that his command over features is simply supreme, and his control of faculties and temper wonderful ; and had he only a broader sense of humour, he might easily pose as the greatest comedian of the age, while as a tragedian he is ready-made.

One more "interesting" item. Pennefather arrived this evening from up country, evidently with the view of following in Willoughby's footsteps.

31st.—Yesterday was a busy one, right into the small hours of this morning. Rhodes was again over very early, and with



him Lange, who is acting as his secretary and general factotum. As before, stock-taking, and taking in a great deal. After a few ordinary remarks, he informed me that he and Pennefather were going to Tuli that night after dinner, and from there through the Transvaal down to the Colony; and he asked me for James and Hackwell, two of my best non-commissioned officers—the latter in charge of transport is perfectly indispensable, and the former as a generally handy, useful man is quite invaluable.

"I am sorry I cannot spare them," I answered. "They are the two handiest men in the troop, and their going would leave me short of N.C.O's."

"N.C.O's., N.C.O's.," went on Rhodes in a vague sort of way. "What are N.C.O's.?"

I explained.

"Oh," he replied, as if suddenly struck by an inspiration, "but you have plenty of sergeants."

"Not one too many, sir, and there is a difference between the duties of the two ranks, and as sergeants do no guards here I shall be left short-handed. But what do you require them for?"

"To look after one of my carts."

"In that case I can give you two troopers who are in every way as good as the two men you want."

But in a quick, decided way Rhodes said emphatically, "No, I prefer corporals, and I must have them." His whole manner changed, and he was quite another man. It was only momentary, a mere flash in the pan; yet by means of it I got a clearer insight into his character than from all the hours I have been with him put together. Then relapsing into the dreamy, dull expression, and shaking his head in a semi-pathetic kind of way, he turned to Lange and said, "They must be good men, or Leonard wouldn't be so anxious to keep them."

"They are thundering good men," retorted I, "and if you take them I hope you will do something for them, at any rate."

"We'll see," was the cautious rejoinder.

And so the Colossus had his own way, for no other reason in the world but because he wanted it—one of the privileges of great men and weak women; not, however, that I draw any comparison between them.

Not politic of me, I know you will say, in even attempting to decline his slightest wish, instead of carrying it out with promptness and alacrity. You are quite right, and I know it;

all the same, were the thing to occur again, I would act in exactly the same way, for though as Rhodes, and the controlling spirit of the whole concern, he can do what he likes, I consider it my duty, as one of the Company's servants, to look after their interests ; and in looking after theirs, I am seeing after his, for he is mainspring and key as well. Whether he was annoyed or not, by so small a fry as myself daring to discuss the giving to him of any two men he wanted, or not, did not affect me ; but I must admit I was nettled at his obstinacy, in depriving the public service of two men who could ill be spared, for a purely personal and selfish purpose, which would have been answered equally well by dozens of men in the troop. In addition to this, I happen to know that Lange and James are old chums, ever since they were at school together, and here you have the *crux* of the whole thing. Lange wants to have James and another good man with him, and learning of Hackwell from James, puts the idea in Rhodes' head. Rhodes, who is much enamoured of the Dutch, with an evident purpose in view, finds the idea excellent and acts on it. The presence here of De Waal, and his proposed visit to return by the Transvaal, are part and parcel of the same plan, cultivation of the Dutch interest—in other words, a political courtship merely. But whether his intentions are honourable or not, it would be difficult for me or anyone else to say, for the Honourable Cecil, like a wise and politic man, keeps his intentions to himself. As to the representatives that are with him, I can say nothing beyond the fact that they do not impress me, but as I have not come into touch with them, I do not even profess to criticise them, and if, like Rhodes, they are to be judged by internal characteristics, I have no doubt the estimate so formed of them would be broad and large !

Close on lunch hour, Rhodes came into the orderly-room and sat down ; so I showed him a letter from Harris countermanding an order of mine, for the Troop Dry Canteen, on Rolfe, Nebel, & Co., of Kimberley, and on my explaining that the order did not include liquor, he took it from me and glanced at it, deliberated for a minute or two, then wrote in pencil across the margin, "Kindly execute order," and signed his name. He seems to have an intense dislike of putting pen to paper, and though I shewed him some more correspondence, this was all the writing and the only signature I got out of him. The last thing he spoke to me was on the subject of the horses

being ridden so hard on despatch service. I told him that I had pointed this out to Harris, who had given me positive orders in his (Rhodes') name that urgent despatches were to be carried at the expense of horseflesh, and at all risk, in fact. To my surprise, he grew quite angry, and said "Nothing of the sort ; Harris had no right to give such orders, and I want you to warn the men to ride quietly and cautiously, as I don't want the horses ridden to death"; and resuming the usual sleepy tenour of his way, he repeated this several times. And when I told him that my orders on the subject were very strict, and that every effort was made to see them carried out, he went away apparently reassured. In his anxiety for the horses, however, no thought of the men entered his head, and it struck me that it was not so much an anxiety that arose from humane motives, as from the sound principle of hard and practical common-sense. Indeed, though I hear on all sides of Rhodes' generosity, and large-minded open-handedness, he does not strike me in any way as being a man of deep feeling, or particularly humane !

We all lunched and dined with the B.B.P., the latter function being in honour of the celebrities, and when it was over, and the customary toasts had been drunk in creamy champagne, out of all kinds of incongruous vessels, Sir Henry Loch got up and made a very appropriate speech. In it he alluded to the political situation and the attitude of King Lobengula and his Matabele braves. Then he complimented the B.B.P. and ourselves on our fine appearance, as well as for the amount of good work we had done, and he laid great stress on the excellent feeling between the two corps. But though his words were well-chosen and well-delivered, his speech was very much after the stereotyped pattern, without soul, and without fire ; the effort of a government official—of a lifeless automaton—who dare not say what he thinks, or what he feels !

Sir Sidney Shippard spoke next, and though he only said a few words, he said them well, and as one accustomed to speak.

Then up rose the Colossus, like a giant refreshed with wine ! Whether it was that the effervescent wine of *la belle France* had exhilarated him, or whether it was that the subject nearest his heart had exercised a similar effect, a happy combination of the two, I cannot say, but certainly he was like a man transformed. No longer that slouching gait, and in place of the heavy eye, orbs full of meaning, flashing with a dangerous gleam that betrayed a fixity of purpose, strength of will, and a

spirit which would do or dare anything, he stood upright and erect, speaking well and to the point on his present scheme of northern expansion and development. Not that he let us into any secrets ; touching generally on what had been, and what was about to be done, holding out dazzling prospects and golden harvests before our eager and expectant eyes, and concluding by promising to officers and men of the B.B.P. the same rights in Mashonaland as those conceded to his own police.

At first he talked very slowly and methodically, as if he was weighing each word with a balance ; but soon warming to his subject with a vigour and intensity that surprised me, he spoke fervently and earnestly, yet slowly and carefully, as *the man in authority*, leaving on me the impression that, though an ordinary conversationalist, in oratory he has an outlet for his thoughts which arrests attention and conveys capacity, and intuitively I felt myself in the presence of a man who was making history in adding rich and fertile possessions to the empire, and so aiding in the cause of civilization and advancement.

A man whose roads to the north, though not macadamised, will pave the way, I firmly believe, to the extension of Imperial influence, and to the establishment of one of the fairest provinces under British rule.

At 11.30 p.m. Sir Henry and his staff retired, and songs became the order of the evening. I remained until 1.30 a.m., when Rhodes and Pennefather left ; but on our arrival in the lines, instead of finding his Cape-cart in readiness, the driver, a coloured boy, was not to be found, though we hunted for him everywhere. The effect of this was truly *colossal*, and put Rhodes into a terrible rage ; he used very strong language against natives in general, but his own in particular, saying they were all alike, and ought to be severely flogged. Then he told me that should the offender turn up during the day, I was to arrest him, and on no account whatever to give him any food ; and he kept on alternately abusing and repeating the order. To settle the difficulty I turned out Malherbe, of my troop, who got the cart ready, and drove them off at 2.30 a.m. *en route* to Tuli.

So you see that even great men have their weaknesses, and it is no wonder, then, that the ordinary man is no hero in the eyes of his valet ; for the incidents just mentioned are, I think, sufficient to shew that, strong as Rhodes is, and great as his control in large matters, over trifles he is small-minded and

easily upset. Of course, it was annoying for the Premier of the Colony to be so treated by an ordinary servant, but it was hardly colossal to act as he did ; besides, he must have known that I had several men who could take his place ! What a contrast to Gordon, who, under similar circumstances, would have accepted the position calmly, and trusted to Kismet.

It was very still this morning, and the flag in the fort has been hanging listless for the first time during several weeks. The day, alternately cloudy and bright, has been warm, and the big-wigs have been out shooting on the Macloutsie. Grey organised a big drive, with 50 men of the B.B.P. mounted as beaters ; but the bag was not a big one, and this evening a bonfire and sing-song terminated the ceremonials, as the Governor leaves to-morrow. Rhodes' boy, by the way, has not put in an appearance as yet, so I expect he has cleared.

Weighing up the Colossus from what I have seen of him, on the whole I must confess to a feeling of disappointment. That he is a strong and masterly man is evident when he is speaking, but that he has weak points in his armour is, I also think, admissible. Indeed, he could hardly be a great man had he not some weaknesses, for great men, we are told, are moulded out of faults. But though during the three days he was here, I had every opportunity of studying him, and though my opinion as to his strength of character grew more confirmed after each conversation, I am not impressed as I should like to have been. And the curious part of it all was that we only talked of trivial things, and that I did not even once induce him to touch on present or future policy, but it is in this very reticence and caution that he shews his wisdom and shrewdness. An impression of great moral strength and capacity. Dogged, determined to a degree, and tenacious to the last gasp, once he gets hold of an idea, he will never let it go until he has attained it. In fact, he is tenacious even to obstinacy, and inclined to petulancy if he cannot have his own way. In a few words, the impression left on me is powerful more than pleasant. With Sir Henry it is altogether different, and there is a charm about him, in a double sense of manner and appearance, that appeals to the feelings pleasantly, yet forcibly, for he, too, I think is strong, but in quite another way. While in Rhodes you are struck by the sheer brute force of will, and rugged genius of mind, in Sir Henry you find a mind educated, and trained to strength, in the refined and tactful, yet skilful science of diplomacy ; and if you could but

divest him of its silken garb, underneath it you would find, I feel sure, the firmness, yet elasticity, of the finest steel chain armour. Tact, courtesy, and coolness go a long way, when backed up by a strong view of sound common sense, one of the most uncommon characteristics of the present neurosthenic and hysterical age, and these Sir Henry possesses in a marked degree ; and this I say in spite of statements to the contrary that I have heard.

A little bird in the form of a lady—a lady bird in fact, herself a South African, and as the wife of a rising Cape politician, *au fait* with all that is going on, and the people that are making the go—whispers me that Sir Henry is not gifted with a specially high order of intellect, and that most, or at all events nearly all, of his success has been due to Lady Loch. Certain it is that at Melbourne she was exceedingly popular, and my lady friend tells me that she is as great a favourite in Cape Town. Of course, we all know what a charming wife with aristocratic connections and interest can do for a man, and I have no doubt that Lady Loch has smoothed the way considerably ; but, in spite of what my lady friend says, and with all due deference to her sex, I stick to what I say.

Let Rhodes and Sir Henry change places, and though I will not go so far as to say they would be failures in their new positions, I feel convinced they would not be successes.

While in the former, thrown on his own resources as he was, and having fought his own way to the forefront from the very beginning, self-reliance and independence are marked features of his character, salient points in fact. To control, not be controlled, to rule untrammelled by official red tape and routine, bugbears of a man who, like him, with boundless ambition, love of power, and the dare-devil spirit of a Drake or Hawkins, combines the strength and principles of Cromwell, and who, in their day, would have been a greater man than he can ever be now, Cecil Rhodes is a colonist on an Imperial scale, and a Creator of empires.

On the other hand, drilled and disciplined in his early days as a soldier, and in his latter as a ruler, Sir Henry, if not born to, has certainly been trained to command, and though, on account of this very training, he is to a certain extent a machine—he is a machine with a code of honour of his own, of a lofty standard, and, as I said before, the *beau ideal* of a Governor, who is representing a great country and a great Sovereign !

With that enquiring turn of mind that I know you possess,

you will ask me, how, or where on earth have I gleaned so much in so short a time; therefore I will anticipate you.

To me, each atom of humanity that I meet is the same as a character in a book, only of greater interest on account of its reality; and I read one, as I do the other, and in the same ratio, according to the intrinsic value. If the character, fictional or real, be commonplace, a hurried glance is usually enough, though on the principle that grain is to be found in every bundle of chaff, I always take the trouble to look.

If, on the other hand, I come across an individuality, I not only read every single word, but weigh them over carefully. To make my meaning plain, I study each trait and characteristic of a strong personality, and the impression it produces on me is set down in my daily scrawl-book. Such an impression may of course be faulty, or altogether wrong, but it is an individual error of judgment, in no way affecting anybody; but the meaning it conveys is correct, or, at all events, an approximate estimate, so far as my modest intellect can interpret it.

In other words, it is but a form or species of magnetism, that depends very much on the feeling of affinity, antipathy, or neutrality that exists between the object of my study and myself. If drawn towards it in spite of myself, a bond of mutual sympathy is established, and it is an affinity. If my feelings revolt against it, and I am repelled in consequence, it is antipathetic or inimical; but if it excites no special sentiment in me, it is neutral, and whereas in the two former conditions I am apt to be prejudiced when framing an opinion, in the latter I am altogether unbiased. And in this way my estimate of Sir Henry has been formed on the first condition, as that of Rhodes is based on the last. And yet, say what the world may about prejudice, it is one of the salts of human nature, indicative of a certain amount of character. But do not misunderstand me, and imagine that, because of my neutrality of feeling towards Rhodes, I take no interest in him. What I have written is in itself a proof of the depth and intensity of my interest, but I want you to understand the difference between a special sentiment and a special interest, and whereas the personality of the man neither attracts nor repels me, his wonderful individuality inspires me with admiration.

I hope my meaning is clear to you, and do not think me priggish, or imbued with conceit, because I flatter myself in being a close observer. I feel I am, but I take no credit for it. I love to listen to people, to watch their actions, learn

their idiosyncrasies, and compare these with their speech ; for it is seldom that people, even parsons, practise what they preach. In one word, I like to observe them closely, in fact.

It is but a harmless hobby of mine, that whiles away many a tedious hour, at the same time that it is instructive, and has been a habit of mine ever since I was twenty. Like the "chiel," I am fond of taking and making notes, but, for my own amusement, and not to rush into print with them ; and it is because of constant practice and much patience, a quality that goes hand-in-hand with partiality and interest, that I get a fair result. This is a longer effort than usual, but recollect that it is not every day I meet a Governor like Sir Henry is, or a colossal human monument such as Rhodes !

And now I will conclude my explanation by a small illustration.

G—, a close student of Nature and humanity, and a smart writer, went out to visit a certain little-known locality, and on his return home, after a year's residence in the place, he decided on writing a book. In want of some technical detail of a certain spot, he wrote and asked L—, who had been out there for many years, to give him the information.

L—, who might have done this in a few hours, is the most conceited little prig in the world, and his reply was characteristic of a priggish, narrow mind. "My dear G—," he wrote back, "pardon my saying so, but it is perfectly ridiculous your writing a book after only passing a year in this locality, when I, who have been out here for ten years, would not even attempt it. I should like very much to supply you with the data you ask for, but, as it would take me three hours a day for exactly a year and seven months to do so, and I am very busy just now, I must beg of you to excuse me !"

To this G— replied : "Dear L—, thank you very much for your letter and kind advice, which I mean to act on at once. You are right, and I have given up all idea of writing the book I had intended to. There are some people, and I am unfortunately one of them, who could not give an impression of men, or things, after the residence of a life-time, while others, like yourself for instance, can do it in next to no time, but are prevented by a too great sense of modesty. Hide not your light under the baneful bushel of bashfulness, but let it, my dear fellow, shine before men with all the power of your magnetic mind, and remember what Shakespeare says about the little candle ! "

CHAPTER XIV.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 1st to 15th November, 1890.

I WAS up at 4.30 this morning, while the camp still lay hushed in the silence of a deep sleep, and bathed in the pale mistiness of the waning moon, which gave it a weird and spectral appearance—some of the far-off tents of the B.B.P. looming ghostly from out the shadowy background of dark bushes that lie beyond.

At 5.30 we were drawn up as guard of honour for Sir Henry Loch, but it was 6.30 before he and his party turned up, so that he was not anything like as thoughtless as Lord Lytton, during his Viceroyalty in India, when he made his entry into Delhi, on the occasion of the Imperial Assemblage and kept several thousand troops, that were lining the streets in his honour, waiting for over eight hours. Indeed, what with the march into Delhi and back, we were fourteen hours on our legs without a meal, and scores of men fell out in consequence.

While we waited for Sir Henry, however, we had the opportunity of witnessing a glorious sunrise, which was a compensation that we did not get at Delhi, and it was curious to watch the strange effect—a less rapid, but more unique, transformation than is seen on the stage—the soft, silvery effulgence of the moon retiring gracefully, but gradually, before the fiery splendour of the sun, whose advent was first of all heralded by a pale flush of pearly pink, succeeded by a beautiful combination of rose and orange colouring, and then, as the sun himself sailed upward, in the sublime majesty of supremacy, over the green-grey undulations eastward, a bright blaze of light burst forth that blotted out every lovely tint but that of the beauteous blue above, and of the grey and white curtain of clouds that girt the horizon like a sash of soft and wavy silkiness.

When Sir Henry did appear he wasted no time, but, shaking

hands with the officers, and wishing us all good luck, he and his party drove off, Lord Elphinstone taking his son, who still is very poorly, I am sorry to say, with him.

Strolling about this morning (2nd), at five o'clock, I found, quite close to my domicile, two flowers—a species of convolvulus—their lovely little pink heads peeping just above the ground, in such refreshing contrast to its dry and dusty surface. Unable to resist the temptation, I plucked them up by the roots, to save them from a fate of infinitely greater ignominy, that of being ruthlessly trampled on and disfigured by some careless Vandal; and now they are on my table, resting in the butt-end of a whisky bottle containing water, and, except for a solitary photo., which stands in a pretty frame that Findlay has improvised for me out of a reed that once flourished on the banks of the Macloutsie, they form the only ornament in my hut. This is built native fashion, only on a larger scale—18 feet by 14 feet—and is quite innocent of door and windows, the former being an opening 6 feet by 3 feet, and the latter square holes, kept intact by the outside frames of two whisky cases. So you see that empty bottles, cases, and everything in connection with whisky is utilised. The walls are mud-coloured, the roof a dingy brown, the eaves of which project all round; so that the prevailing light inside is, as a rule, sombre, dim, and gloomy, except occasionally when a stray sunbeam steals in through some little chink and brightens it up, or, as now, my twin flowers, small and insignificant as they are, do not waste their sweetness either on me or on the surrounding gloom, on which they shed a lustre of their own that lights it up; just as the star of the evening, shooting heavenward, illumines the dusky shades of approaching night. Growing poetical in my old age, you will say. Well, if it were possible for anything to transform prosy me into a poet, the unlimited freedom, the extraordinary universality, and the manifold beauties of Nature would do it, but nothing else.

And now to prose again. Bruce left us to-day to go to Charter. Though crotchety, and given to moods, he is useful in his way, and hard-working, and I am sorry to lose him.

MacAdam tells me that he has received orders from the Governor to survey 100 square miles, which the Government are going to buy to form a township, and he has asked me to lend him Davis to assist, which I have done. Davis is an excellent fellow, who was an officer in some line regiment, but unfortunately went the pace too rapidly. He is very smart all

round, but bad-tempered, and, among other things, is a good draughtsman, and seems very glad to get the opportunity of having something congenial to do. Capper arrived from Tuli on Guy Fawkes' Day, which the B.B.P. celebrated by a discharge of rockets. We have taken to messing at Campbell's, as there is no one in the troop now who can cook properly, or who cares to, at all events, and he caters for us very well. Indeed, if any one up here deserves to make a fortune, Campbell does, as running a restaurant is uphill work.

I was up as usual to see the sun rise on the 6th day of this month, and a beautiful rise it was too. The morning altogether was delightful, and I was not alone in my opinion, for the white ants in myriads were out of their holes, covering the ground all round! There were no early birds about, so they had the field all to themselves. Is this a sign of rain, or what does it mean? Can you tell me? They did not seem to be in search of food, as they were wandering about aimlessly. Crowds of them were close to my hut in dry, gravelly soil, but so far I have not seen one inside, and this applies to all our huts and tents. So different from India, where nothing will keep them out, except water, which they leave alone, for they will face even the smooth and slippery surface of glass, and build their muddy tunnels over it. Can it be that they have more in the veldt than they can eat? or is it that they have not as yet found us out?

Hunter brought me in a piece of lovely crystal that he dug up in a reef near the Macloutsie; also another piece in process of formation, and evidently before it had undergone a course of baking. What a field for the geologist! rich in nearly all strata of the world's history, and lying at our feet ready for us to open, first with pick and shovel, and then to unfold, through science, a richness that, as I ride down spruits and gullies and over rises and ridges, makes me regret my woeful ignorance.

People in dribbles are already beginning to arrive, and to-day (7th) I gave Fleming, a prospector for the Imroth Syndicate, a seat on the post-cart to Tuli.

An undoubted proof that we are drawing nearer to civilisation by degrees is apparent by the presence in camp of the telegraph party, whose tents are pitched quite close to our huts. Standford, who is in charge, and Mair, his assistant, called on me this afternoon, and stayed nearly three hours chatting. They belong to the advanced section, which is

surveying the route to be traversed, and making the holes for the posts. Standford is a pleasant, chatty fellow, and Mair, who is quieter, seems to have a vein of dry humour, extra *sec* enough to be Scotch.

I was just on the point of moralising on the construction of the human mind, with its jumble of conflicting passions and principles, its utter Babel of thought, its eternal contest between conscience and chaos, culminating in confusion worse confounded—but from pure charity I desist. Thinking of Harford gave rise to it. He is the simplest fellow I have ever met. Personally I like simplicity, which is a rarity in these rapid *fin de siècle* days, and to me it is quite as refreshing as a shower of rain on a baking hot day in the glaring sand of the Soudan desert, on which rain has not fallen for over two years; but H——'s simplicity is hard to unravel. His power of discernment is absolutely deficient. In fact, mentally speaking, he is as blind as a mole, and he cannot for the life of him discriminate between the real and the unreal. He is a butt, poor fellow, for every one to poke fun at, and there are two in particular, whose names are not worth mentioning. Though they are not fit to black his boots, for he is a manly little fellow and a thorough gentleman, they buzz round him like a moth round a flame. On the other hand is myself, who, because I like the boy, treat him seriously, and give him a helping hand whenever I can. Yet, strange to say, he does not distinguish between us, and confounds my earnest sincerity for their puerile chaff!

Curious, to say the least of it, and yet not so, I suppose, when the extraordinary infinity and contradiction of the mental construction is taken into consideration, an infinity that is as endless as space itself, yet quite as full of discordant and unknown elements. No wonder, then, that confusion reigns in chaos, in the absence of light the inspirer, and during the reign of darkness, so accounting for the conflicting and chaotic ideas of wandering humanity!

A man calling himself Major Graves, of the "Royal Malagasy Artillery," and his wife, arrived here this morning, the 9th, and the former came to me for orders. I had none to give him, as the Colonel had left me no definite instructions; however, I took him on our strength as a subaltern, very much to his disgust, as he informed me that Pennefather had promised him the artillery troop, and he was still more disgusted when I told him that we had only one gunner troop, of which Lendy was

in command. He is a big man, and talks big, and now he wants me to give him a whole waggon to take himself and wife up to Salisbury. "I am sorry I cannot oblige you," I replied, "because transport is both scarce and expensive; besides, I am afraid it is rather too soon in the day to take ladies up there—they would only be in the way." This plain speaking rather surprised him, and, being the truth, is, of course, unpalatable, though I am inclined to think that, in his case, "it is needs must when the devil drives." It is the best way, however, as beating about a bush is no use.

Tye's presence, so far, has made no appreciable difference in our commissariat and transport supply, which are still woefully deficient, so that it is not fair to bring a lady while we are still in the chrysalis stage; for even here it is too rough, but up there it will be far worse, to say nothing of the sharp sword of destiny hanging over us in the uncertainty of Matabele action.

I have been slightly off colour for the last few days, and Mother Patrick sent me down some broth and chicken, which were simply delicious. As I have not tasted barndoar since I left Kimberley the change from tough trek ox was truly enjoyable, so I walked up to hospital this afternoon to thank her. Afterwards Harford and I rode up the Tati road, calling in at MacAdam's Camp on our way back. As we picked our way through the veldt, we dropped across a tiny flower very like a sweet pea in shape and shade, but scentless, a solitary gem among the withered weeds and grasses all round, looking woe-begone yet lovely.

The flies are growing a greater nuisance than ever, and, on our rides in the veldt, they drive the ponies simply crazy. Punch, like the sensible little chap he is, bolts like mad whenever he gets the chance, to shake them off. Can science tell us how they are evolved, and for what purpose? From the foetid slime of matter as a food supply, perhaps, but as a vicious pest to man and beast, for certain. Various kinds of insect life have been buzzing round my candles to-night, making me speculate on the prospects of approaching rain, and I must say the sky looks uncommonly like it; but so it has done for the past two months.

News of young Elphinstone's death at Palla, on the journey to Mafeking, has just reached us. We are all very sorry to hear of it, and think the journey must have hastened the end. This makes the third death we have had lately. Mr. Trusted, the B.B.P. chaplain, who had been ailing for some time, went

up to Tuli not many days ago for a change, and died there, and the B.B.P. have lost a trooper here. All three poor fellows from the same disease, dysentery. It is wholesome, no doubt, to be occasionally reminded that in the midst of life we are in death, but it is none the less depressing for all that.

Slept badly last night on account of the intense sultriness. Got up about 11 p.m. to quench my thirst, and stood outside peering into the pitchy darkness. It was drizzling slightly, so I turned in again, and, after reading for an hour, fell asleep, to be wakened at 2 a.m. by a raging dust-storm sweeping through my tent. This lasted for some time, and, in consequence, the air to-day is clearer and cooler.

Some paper I was reading the other day speaks of us gold-seekers as "making history." I go further—very bold of me, no doubt—and say that we are preparing the future battle-ground of Europe, or, to be more accurate, of the European nations. A curious fact in connection with this subject is that Russia, of all the great powers, has no footing in Africa. What does this mean? Has she Turkey in her mind's eye, or does she think that there is scope enough and more for her in Central Asia and eastwards to India and China, and is she reserving all her power and resources to use in that direction? I am not a Russophobe, still here is food for deep reflection, and the fact remains a fact, which is singular, to say the least of it.

It has been cool and cloudy all day, with only a very occasional glimpse of the sun, which shone out brightly for half an hour before sunset, and thunder growling in the distance between 1 and 3 p.m. to vary the monotony.

The veldt looks much fresher and greener since the late showers, and the hills this evening looked deeply and darkly blue, while Sol peeped out from behind a black cloud, and had one last look at us, painting the scene a fiery scarlet, that made a peculiar colouring of shades and contrasts.

We had another tremendous sand-storm yesterday (13th), that blew from three p.m. to six p.m., succeeded by a fresh and lovely morning. A walk round the camp has set me thinking that, when the rain does come, I am afraid it will do much mischief to weak and delicate men. Many stenches are already floating about; but when the heavy downpour comes, they will be worse; and we shall almost be in a position to draw a favourable comparison between Macloutsie and Cologne, with its two-and-seventy stenches, all well defined,

and several stinks. Or yet, again, if the rain is only heavy enough, it may wash the offending matter away, to enrich the soil elsewhere. Let us hope so, at all events ! For so Nature, ever watchful, works unceasingly and systematically, to carry out her laws of sanitation, as well as of increase and decrease.

Sergeant-Major Reid, with forty-two recruits from Kimberley, has arrived ; and I have been busy all day sending twenty volunteers from my troop to the front, also twenty-two of the recruits up to Tuli.

The following letter, dated Fort Salisbury, September 19th, from Condon to me, will interest you :—

“ I was glad to get your note, and to know that you are well. Well, here we are at last, in the celebrated land of promise. This place is situated almost on the flat, which is dotted here and there with bush, and with the Makabuse River—save the mark !—running parallel on the east side of the camp. There is any amount of shooting here—enough to gladden the heart of the most enthusiastic sportsman.

“ The great question of the day, ‘ Gold,’ is yet, of course, a matter of surmise. Two or three parties of prospectors are already at work on the Mazoe River, and as usual in a ‘ new rush,’ the most extravagant reports are circulated about the camp as to the richness of the fields, especially alluvial. I heard to-day that the men who are prospecting for you fellows have struck something good ; but I have no proof, so take it with a big pinch of salt.

“ I start away to-morrow for the Mazoe, to see for myself, and will let you know what I think of it. Of course, you know as much as I do of the whereabouts of the different troops, so it would simply be a waste of time to write on the subject.

“ Do you think of coming up here ? As there is a great scarcity of news, you will have to excuse a short note this time.

“ Mackay, Baumann, and self all wish to be remembered to Grey, Bruce, and, of course, yourself. With kindest regards,

“ I remain, my dear Leonard, yours very truly,
“ (Signed) GEO. CONDON.”

CHAPTER XV.

PILAPWIE.

From 16th November to 23rd November, 1890.

AS you see from above, I am writing you from Pilapwie, and if you have patience I will tell you how I got here. Standford and Mair were obliged to come on business, and as I want a change, and have a reasonable excuse in trying to get some more men out of Khama, I gladly accepted Standford's offer to accompany them.

We left Macloutsie at 6.30 a.m. on the 16th, stopping for breakfast at the Marapong, a dry stream with a pool near the drift, and on the road, for lunch. As we drove along, I was much struck by the beauty and profusion of the wild flowers, brought out, I suppose, by the late rain. Sweet-pea and convolvulus were the most common, and pink lilies in large clusters, also a few fine red ones, and a sort of sweet-smelling honeysuckle, and ever so many kinds of nameless little flowers. Nameless to me at least, but lovely for all that in their namelessness, making the brown earth and dusty green bushes look all the more beautiful by their bright and varied colours. I noticed also some baobab-trees, standing, as a rule, quite solitary, and looking so out of place beside the small mapani and smaller bushes, for all the world like some old-time worn remnants of the prehistoric age!

Beyond the Pakwe we saw about fourteen ostriches running like red-shanks, and also a herd of "wilde beest" on the *qui vive*, and looking quite fierce and picturesque as they watched our movements. We got shots at both, but none of them took effect.

It was 6 p.m. when we reached the Makwatchi river and outspanned for the night. Here we met Dreyer, who is bringing us up some waggons and stores. He is a Colonial of German descent, and the *fac-simile* of a Saxon, with blue eyes and tawny beard, tall, well-built, and a pleasant, well-informed man. After dinner we had a smoke and a chat, and in bed by

9 p.m. We were up before 5 a.m. Standford and I walked on ahead of the cart, which caught us up when we had walked about three miles. At the Suki river we met Pemberton, who was returning from escort duty to the Governór, breakfasted together, and it was late when we went on. Rain had been threatening ever since the previous day, but luckily we got to Elebe, where we took shelter in the old B.B.P. huts, in time; and though they leaked, we managed to keep ourselves dry, as for quite an hour it came down heavily. We amused ourselves watching the flies and spiders, and dodging the leaks, until the shower was over, when we took a stroll round what remains of the fort, which is on some high rocky ground. On its eastern face we found in a round bush a small nest hanging to a tiny stalk, with a little brownish bird, not unlike a chaffinch, crouching in it, while the nest kept swaying to and fro with a gentle and even motion; but though we touched and stroked the wee birdie, it never moved, and did not seem in the least afraid. Was it confidence in our humanity, I wonder, or a determination to protect its expected offspring, that gave it the courage of utter recklessness, or what was it? Whatever the cause, I feel sure that in this case intelligence prevailed over instinct, and, instead of trying to save itself, birdie alone thought of preserving her chicks.

To revert again to the spiders and their victims, it occurred to me as I watched them spin their silken toils, so silently and cunningly, for the unconscious and unwary flies, that we human atoms might well take a lesson in learning how to avoid the harpies and hawks who fleece, then fatten on us. But, like the flies, it is a question of the blind leading the blind, for it is not even after the event that we are always wise.

At 3.30 p.m. we drove on until 8 p.m., with only one outspan, and we stopped for the night on the banks of the Lotsani. The two sunsets we have had were simply stupendous, and on this evening in particular, as I lay on my back looking upward, a most wonderful panorama of fanciful creations evolved before me! Faces without number, figures of all kinds of men and animals, a country vast and mountainous, gloriouslywooded, a noble river flowing, a rushing cataract, and a magnificent waterfall falling into space—and with it over went my reverie, as Standford shouted to me to have a drink.

It was not until 6.30 p.m. on the 18th that we reached Pilapwie, having walked the horses for the last ten miles. One of them had been rather poorly the whole way, and we

had been obliged to doctor him as best we could, giving him strong drenches of whisky, and putting tobacco on his bit.

For the last twenty-five miles or so into Pilapwie, all underneath the Chipong hills, Khama's people were very busy ploughing and sowing, and nearly all of them were using European ploughs.

This morning I breakfasted with Maurice Gifford, and mooned about all day doing little or nothing. I must say that since I passed through here in May, the premises of the B.T.A. have been much improved, and Stecker has built himself quite a model hut, with glass windows and doors, and fairly well furnished inside. Such a contrast to our dingy shanties! This evening Standford and I rode up the hill to call on Mr. and Mrs. Hepburn. They live on a spur of the hill that overhangs the town, where it is cooler and healthier, and from which they have a fine view: add to this a nice house and garden, and you will admit that they are very comfortable. They were very pleased to see us, and Mrs. Hepburn gave us some delightful home-made bread, and real fresh butter, the first I have eaten for six months, and tea with fresh milk that tasted to me like nectar.

Yesterday was an uneventful, lazy day, passed pleasantly enough, in reading *Through One Administration* and *I Say, No*, broken only by an interview with Khama, which took place at the Hepburns' house, and which, in spite of Mr. Hepburn's persuasive eloquence in the Mangwato tongue, ended unsatisfactorily, the chief declaring that he is unable to give me the men I require, as he cannot spare them; and, if you ask me, I have an idea that Khama has no love for the Chartered Company, and that he looks on our passage through his country with displeasure. But to-day has been profitably as well as pleasantly spent, and I have plenty to tell you of in consequence. I have had all my meals with Maurice Gifford and Moffatt, where, I am pleased to say, I had the opportunity of meeting Van Royen, a Dutch hunter, second only in reputation and adventurous exploits to the great Selous, who has quite recently returned from Buluwayo; and if he is a typical specimen of his race, then all I can say is, that the race is one typical of splendid manhood, and high up in the scale of humanity.

Had I brought all the powers my imagination is capable of, to picture one of Cromwell's heroic Ironsides, I could not have produced a more faithful likeness. A serious, if not stern, but open face, with a do-or-die expression of firm resolve and

dogged determination, a strong, well-knit figure, slightly above the middle height, with sinews and muscles of iron, I could not resist scanning Van Royen's features as closely as possible, with an inward admiration of him ; for Boer or not, a man, in spite of his nationality, is a man no less, and all the more in fact. And here before me was a man accustomed all his life to run the gauntlet of danger in every conceivable form, and as inured to hardship as an epicure is to luxurious pleasure, yet quiet and unobtrusive ! A stamp of man one does not meet every day !

He talked but little of his hunting exploits unless pressed, and even then his anecdotes bore the impress of possibility and truth upon them. So refreshing a contrast to the ordinary Boer, who is such a braggart, and well versed in the fiction of Munchausen. I was fortunate enough to get him to myself for some time, and one way or the other I extracted a good deal of information from him.

He spoke of the Matabele and Lobengula, and says it is quite true about the latter having sent Dawson(?) to Salisbury to prospect, and mark out claims for him. He is of opinion that at present there is no chance of a collision, not even at the end of the year, when harvest festivities and the great annual dance take place, though it is thought by some that they will work themselves up into such a state of frenzy through drink and excitement that it is more than probable they may attack.

Van Royen, however, thinks the time is past, and that now there is no fear. When the B.B.P. and ourselves were massed at Macloutsie they were, naturally enough, suspicious, as they imagined we were about to invade their country, and they would not believe that we were only going round it into Mashonaland. At that time it would have taken little or nothing, especially with the young regiments, to fan the flame that was burning very steadily, into war. Now everything looks settled and quiet, and the people seem resigned to their fate. "Loben," he added, as I thought rather significantly, "knows full well the power of the English, and he is determined to prevent his people from fighting them!"

Granted all this. Still, for my part, I do not altogether agree with him, and think it is only the peace before the storm. Wait till they get an opportunity, and then ? One point I think worthy of notice, and that is—the fact of our having had a force, both at Macloutsie and Tuli, during the

advance of the column to Salisbury, thereby exposing Buluwayo to a flank attack, or turning movement, must have had a powerful and wholesome effect on the Matabele, which, if the truth were known, in a great measure, if not effectually, checked them from attacking the column.

A story Van Royen told me regarding Matabele ideas on the telegraph wire, which was then approaching Pilapwie, is suggestive and instructive ; for it shows that, steeped in superstition, and in spite of their ferocity, these despised savages have an intelligence in their so-called cunning, which is as keen as a sharp razor !

Sam Edwards and he were speaking to some of the leading Indunas one day, who, after a little time, approached them very cautiously on the subject of the telegraph, behind which, it was their belief, was some dark and ulterior design !

After a great deal of hesitation and beating about the bush, they one and all blurted out their suspicions by declaring that we white men were bringing up the wire to tie up their king with.

Both Edwards and himself tried hard to dissuade them from this idea, explaining to them its real and actual purpose, but it was utterly useless.

Shaking their heads, they replied, "Oh, we quite believe you ; we know you would not lie to us ! Still, it is a bad sign, this wire—a bad sign ! We know you would not allow anyone to tie up our king, and we quite believe you ; for all that, it is a bad sign !" And, with an expression of doubt on their faces, they continued shaking their heads. And they are not far out, I think, in their view of the question.

Another interesting item of information he told me, is about the two white bulls sent to Lobengula by the Queen. They are dead, poor things, and no wonder. Change of climate and change of food have been too much for them, or, if you take it in a literal sense, too little. Never fed, but allowed to pick up what they could, they wore away into shadows, picking up all the old nails and pieces of rusty iron they could find, and so they died an ignominious death, killed by neglect and starvation in strange and barbarous Buluwayo. A true tale of woe with a pointed moral to adorn it !

I have little more to tell you now. Van Royen I have not seen again, and, I regret to say, am not likely to, as I hear he has left.

A marked improvement is now to be expected from the

B.T.A. with a new management, which itself is under supervision, but as its monopoly still remains, and is likely to, as far as I can see, for some time to come, I am afraid expectation of reform will not altogether be realised, though this should not affect minor questions, such as an improvement in the class and variety of goods, and free disbursement of hard cash as change for cheques instead of good furs !

One important fact remains to be mentioned. Here, where not two years ago Nature reigned supreme in her silent sway, and which has only recently become the haunt of busy man, we are now in touch with the centre of civilisation, and through Standford's kindness I have been listening to a talk over the wires with Mafeking, who had nothing startling to tell us, however. O sacred shade of Virgil, let me evoke thy glorious muse to sing once more of brains and the man who, wondrous to relate, put to a use so practical the vital spark of Nature, that enables us to exchange our thoughts over a distance undreamt of in thy sleepy day. Whether this invocation ever reached the departed shadow or not I will not say—I can only venture to remark very improbable, yet not impossible, for there are more things in heaven and earth, in the great infinity through which we revolve, than human philosophy can or ever will unfold.

No more now, as I have a lot to do this afternoon, and am off to-morrow morning to ride across country on a pony I have taken over from the Telegraph. It is a Basuto, and apparently a smart little rascal, though I don't like it nearly so well as Punch, who I am keeping in reserve.

One item more and I have done. Merely an incident. A night adder was found on my bed and killed half an hour before I turned in.

CHAPTER XVI.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 24th to 27th November, 1890.

YOU recollect my moralising to you on wishing some time ago? Well, since last I wrote from Pilapwie, I have had quite an adventure, in a small way, and the weird part of it all is, that for once, at all events, a wish of mine has been actually realised. Not, however, in quite so pleasant a form as to make me wish for a recurrence; yet there is some slight consolation in the fact that it was not very bad, and might have been far worse. And what is more, it has been an experience, and a real practical lesson of putting precept into practice.

The fact is, that I have been lost in the veldt for a day and a night, or, to be more accurate, twenty-seven hours and a half. "Phew! that's nothing," I can hear you say in that provokingly contemptuous manner of yours; and neither is it, yet under the circumstances it was quite enough. But wait and hear me out before you criticise.

To commence where I left off, I did little or nothing on the 22nd and 23rd except to see a good deal of Maurice Gifford and the telegraph people. Van Royen had left for the Transvaal, I think, but am not sure. I am sorry I did not see as much of him as I should have liked to; for it is not a common occurrence either to meet, come across, or drop on to, one of Nature's gentlemen, a genuine son of hers, who has lived in, and with, Nature all his life. But South Africa, in every way, is a land of constant, rapid change and marvel. Humanity, like wind-wasted straws blown hither and thither, or tossed to and fro as are the devils that career wildly over and across its uneven surface—here to-day, gone to-morrow—where to, no one knows, no one cares. Travellers, all of us—if not pilgrims and sojourners—adrift on the ocean of life, and passing each other in the rolling veldt, as ships do on the swelling sea, stopping, maybe, to give greeting, slowing down to exchange signals, or,

rushing on heedless, without even a look or a sign ! Passing, perchance, under the fiery sun or the mellow moon, or, yet again, in the darkness of the night, guided merely by the flickering ray of one of God's own glittering gems, which seem to hang suspended in heaven like distilled dewdrops that have been frozen in their fall !

And so the world wags, and we wag through it, forgetting the past, ignoring the present, and regardless of the future that dangles over us in blank and awesome mystery !

Maurice Gifford improves on acquaintance. At first I was inclined to be neutral in my attitude towards him, but the more I see of him, the more I like him. Similar to the cove in the comic song, "He's all right when you know him, but you've got to know him first"; and I am not so sure that this isn't the best way after all, though, of course, frankness and geniality, in these solitudes especially, are far more agreeable and refreshing. He seems a sterling sort of fellow, who has roughed it a lot, and seen a deal of life all over the world. Amongst other things, sailed before the mast, and ranched it in America. He is as hard as nails in consequence, and quite at home in the saddle, which is Mexican by the way, and not easy to fall out of. In spite of his general excellence, he does not impress me as a man of business, which Stecker is to his finger-tips, though as a superintendent, keeping his eyes open and about him, he answers the purpose well. In fact, my idea is that he is a kind of middleman between the business manager and the directors.

Standford and Mair left to go down country at 6 a.m. on the 24th. I saw them off, and my intention was to start, after breakfast, for Taopsi, *en route* for Macloutsie, but, like many a bygone intention, it was defeated by Gifford inducing me to remain on to lunch. Against my better judgment I did, but only at my own expense, and to the solid endowment of hell, which is now the richer by a good round paving-stone ! But why should hell get all the benefit ? For if nothing else can ensure our future bliss, good intentions ought, because the way of life, God knows, is strewn thick enough with them to guarantee us happiness untold in this stage, the stage after, and the next again after that. One consolation, however, is that, if Gifford had not tempted me, I should have been minus an experience, and you a scrawl ; so, with this sage and comforting reflection, I will get on.

I sent on Punch with Knight and White, two of my men who were on duty, and coming back with me, keeping for

myself the pony that Standford had handed over to me, telling them to make straight for Taopsi, and that it was most likely I would catch them up ; but, as I managed somehow to fool away the time until 1.40 p.m., so giving them six hours' start, I gave up all hope of it, setting my whole mind on getting there as soon as possible !

As it was across country, by the route that had been surveyed for the telegraph, which I had never seen before, and only had the vaguest idea of, from a rough little sketch that Mair had kindly given me, you can well imagine how shadowy loomed my hopes as I rode on, looking for a hole that had been made for a telegraph pole, some fifteen miles out from Pilapwie, on the post-cart road, and from which point I was to strike off into the veldt. This found, I was to ride in an easterly direction, more or less, for Taopsi, a high hill, at which the B.B.P. have a signal station !

Explicit, very, for a man who knew something about the way, but for one who did not, a trifle meagre to go on. I do not know if you have ever looked for a needle in a bundle of hay ? I have not actually, but I can quite sympathise with the unfortunate who has, after my little experiment of looking for that hole in the veldt. May I never have to look for another ! is all I can say. When I had ridden along the road for nearly three hours, and covered as I calculated about fifteen miles, I began to look for the hole, but no hole rewarded my expectant eyes, which were bulging out of my head from very eagerness, and from the unusual strain put upon them. Thinking I had passed the spot, I rode back for some little distance, turned and went on again, but still no hole, and, as it was getting on for five o'clock, I took the bull of my dilemma by the horns, and struck into the bush-covered veldt, leaving the declining sun behind me. Not without inwardly heaping enough anathemas and apostrophes upon the hole to fill it to the brim.

I soon found a narrow path that led me to a farm, and as I approached it, I met some women, who ran like redshanks when they saw me. However, I found some men and one or two women with more sense, and by means of signs, and a correct pronunciation of the word Taopsi, I asked my way. The men stared at me open-mouthed, and one of them, slightly more intelligent than the rest, repeated "Aye" until it annoyed me, but one of the women understood, and turning, pointed in the direction of a hill. Thanking her, I cantered on, and recognised the hill from Mair's sketch, but miles and

miles from my destination. As I went I reflected on the superior sharpness of women over men, no matter what their colour, as well as on the folly of ignorance, and I found myself in direct variance with a thought of other days.

"Can ignorance be ever bliss?" I argued to myself. If so, when and how? "But it cannot be," hotly replied my other self. Ignorance of no kind or sort can be called a bliss. I wish the creature who wrote such twaddle would change places with myself. As the Yankee says, I guess he would change his opinion. In my ignorance of the Mangwato tongue, where does the bliss come in?

"You are right, other self," said I, "and would that the airy mantle of a fairy godmother could fall on us for the nonce, and transform our useless Queen's English into the more useful gibberish of these dusky swains."

"It's no use wishing," snapped other self, "as you well know wishes never come except when you don't want them to, and you have already wished once too often. Look at the sun, dear No. 1, and push on as hard as you can, or we shall have to camp out all night, and I don't quite like the idea of it myself. Do you?"

"Certainly not," was my rejoinder; and with a touch of the spur we went on, but the bush and undergrowth were so thick that we could only move very slowly, having to pick our way very gingerly in many places. When we had got round the hill, to my delight I discovered the track of wheels that had been left by the telegraph waggons, and as the country was more open, we cantered on, and not long after, came to where the line of holes ran right across it, so that there was no doubt whatever that we were at last on the right track.

"This is more encouraging," said I.

"Decidedly so," echoed other self; "but it's after six, the sun has nearly gone, and, at the outside, we have only ridden twenty-two miles, so you and the pony had better lose no time. You are responsible for this yourself. You know you are, and as you have nothing to eat, and a pint of cold tea to wash it down, we can look forward to a pleasant time if we don't get into Taopsi."

"Hope at all events looms a trifle more substantial," whispered I.

"That is more than I can say of Taopsi," came in a softer whisper from No. 2.

But the track to which we pinned our faith turned out to

be a snare and a delusion. Slight at its best, on soft soil, to our unpractised eyes it left no trace where the ground was rocky, and soon we lost it altogether, to find it once more, and lose it again.

It was now seven o'clock, and the moon, on which we had centred our hopes, failed; and what made it all the more tantalising was that though she was due, instead of doing her duty like a good moon, she was galivanting about with the clouds, playing hide-and-seek, first with one, then with another. In fact, it is hard to say which of the two she was doing most, except that we saw next to nothing of her.

"Dreadful flirt, that moon," said I to No. 2.

"Look here, No. 1, you've been mooning enough yourself for the last hour or two. Drop it, and go ahead."

"Where to?"

"Oh, anywhere. Down that path for choice," as we struck a well-defined track.

But this leading to nowhere, we came to another standstill.

"Promising, this!"

"Very," growled No. 2.

"What's to be done?"

"Get on."

It was all very well saying "Get on," but we kept getting round and round instead, one path leading us into a dried-up vley, another into a stony kopje—a lucky hit for the pony, as we found a puddle of slimy water, the last remnant of a rain-shower, which he sucked through his teeth quite greedily—and a third landed us into a dense thicket of thorn-bushes, which tore and scratched us into ribbons. Dismounting, we blundered through it as best we could, avoiding pitfalls to fall into ant and bear holes; and, coming across a fourth, which ended nowhere, I began to think that we had fallen into a regular maze of mazes.

Suddenly it dawned on me that these were paths made by the cattle when grazing, so I appealed to No. 2 as to whether we should go on or halt for the night.

"Not much use going on at this rate, is it?" he grumbled.

"None whatever. Hope you are satisfied now you have your wish, and that the commissariat arrangements are satisfactory?"

"We'll look presently," said I. Yet still we blundered on. It was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead, but in a few minutes, out of a rift in the clouds, came the moon, and revealed to us an open space, with short green grass.

"There's little use wandering any further in this insane, purposeless fashion, fashing ourselves for nothing," remarked the pony, as he stopped and munched a choice tuft of young grass.

"Right you are, my boy," I replied, as, suiting the action to the word, I off-saddled and knee-halter'd him; "so you can munch away to your heart's content." But as the little beggar, hobbles and all, began making short tracks homewards, I tied him up to a bush with the inevitable reim, gave him a slight rub down, and a few handfuls of grass that I had gathered. It was now 9.30 p.m.

Sitting on a stump close by, I proceeded to inspect my commissaria: with inward trepidation, for unfortunately I knew only too well what it was. Opening my haversack, I emptied its contents very carefully on the ground. A tiny tin of potted bloater, two cigars, a matchbox, and I must not forget my pocket diary, pencil, and a pint of cold tea.

"Not so bad, after all!" I ejaculated. "It certainly might have been worse."

"Arthur Glyn Leonard," said my irrepressible shadow in a very deliberate and decided manner, "you are a blank fool!"

"Why?" I queried feebly.

"Because you do not practise as you preach. So far I have flattered myself that you were a practical sort of fellow, but now I find that you are a preacher like the majority—one of those sanctimonious creatures who do not mean what they say; of the 'Don't do as I do, but do as I tell you,' band. How often have I heard you giving your men fits for not carrying enough food with them, and here are you, not within 100 miles of a square meal, without a morsel, except that thing" (taking up the potted bloater), "which is calculated to give you an endless thirst; and where are you going to quench it, I'd like to know?"

"My good No. 2, this is the first time in my life, as you know, that I have come or gone empty-handed!"

"Granted; but it is once too often, and let us hope it will be the last. But why reproach me, when you are quite as much to blame? Had you only been firm when I was going to put that half-loaf into my bag, I should have brought it, and half a loaf, as you know, is better than no bread!"

"Tut! I have no patience with you, Arthur Glynn. You did not make up your mind, and you brought no bread, and now you are trying to throw the blame on to me. Keep it

yourself ; I don't want it. I am altogether disgusted with you. Never again call yourself a practical man in my presence. Bah ! you are only a preacher !"

"At all events, we have some matches," I whispered, in a very subdued tone, "so can have a fire and a smoke, or both together, as moralists are agreed that one never goes without the other."

"Poor look out for me, No. 2." And the shadow sighed querulously. "You have the best of the bargain, for I only get a spurious second-hand sort of consolation."

"Quite good enough for a mere shadow," I retorted.

Thus far I had been in shirt sleeves, so, unstrapping my coat, I put it on, as, though it was still pleasantly warm, I thought it wiser to take precautions before the night air grew chilly ; then, lighting a cigar, I picked out the softest spot I could find, and converting my saddle into a pillow, lay on my back and smoked.

Looking up at the cloud-covered heavens, I reflected and puffed away, and puffed away and reflected, as I watched the grey smoke curling spirally or into rings, then stealing gently into space, and as it glided upwards into void and nothingness, I fell into contemplation—sad, yet sweet.

"Who is it has written that 'thought is deeper than all speech'?" For the life of me I could not recollect, and I found myself wondering aloud if he had ever lived in solitude, or been lost in some vast wilderness.

"Doubt it," came in a mocking whisper.

Continuing my reflection. "It is Byron who speaks of the power of thought, the magic of the mind, is it not?"

"Yes ; but although he was a poetic romancer, he never went astray—not in the veldt, at least, and not even during one of his terrific flights of imagination."

Paying no attention to these flippant remarks, but thinking silently, the full measure and grandeur of these lines never occurred to me so clearly as they did when I lay stretched on the hard ground ; and certainly never until now had I so thoroughly enjoyed the solace and companionship of tobacco, for it enabled me to appreciate all the more philosophically the loneliness of my situation—yet I could scarcely call it lonely, for my persistent other self was always with me.

And as I smoked very, very slowly, my numerous thoughts, first on one subject, then on another, chased each other with lightning speed, and with the regulated precision of a merry-

go-round ; while the number of airy, fairy castles that I built amid the smoke of my modest Manilla, would have covered the veldt between Pilapwie and Macloutsie. For an hour and a half I smoked that cigar, until the two ends had got so near each other that the match I had inserted between them began to burn, so I threw it away, not without a sigh, muttering as I did, "All things have an end"; but from the shadow came a wail, "Except our little adventure."

Now I resigned myself to thought alone, and then to sleep, but it was no use. Trying every conceivable way, first on one side, over to the other, on my back and on my face, and then from one to the other again. On the top of this every well-known method I could think of. Counting, I got through millions, and the word "sheep" I repeated over and over again. Only one little letter removed from the reality itself, all to no purpose, however.

That dreadful demon of disquiet was too much for me, and filled my head with thought after thought, until they tumbled and rolled over each other, and mind got the mastery over matter, while, to add to this, clouds of midges and mosquitoes gave me no peace.

Few things have been so much and so beautifully written about as sleep and its twin sister death, and by no one so beautifully as Shakespeare, but how very prosy they appeared to me in my present circumstances.

"It's when you do not want to sleep you can, and when you do you cannot."

"A remarkable fact!" purred No. 2.

"Now, why cannot I, forlorn and supperless wretch, fall asleep, so as to wake up in the morning fresh and invigorated?"

"An answerless enigma!" sniggered my relentless shadow, who was in reality responsible for my wakefulness.

So I stared up into the cloudy canopy above me, as if I would pierce it through ; but the midges getting more active, I jumped up, lit a match, and found it was only midnight. It was evident that the elves and fays of the veldt were on the stir, for all kinds of weird sounds quite suddenly fell upon the surrounding stillness. Whether they were playing blind man's buff or follow your leader, I could not decide, and I could distinctly hear them calling from one to the other; but, on second thoughts, judging from the jarring, hooting, and barking noises they made, I decided that they were imitating the birds and beasts around them. I had no time to be nervous,

however, and my pony appearing to be infected by the same spirit of unrest, I went over and patted him. Poor little fellow, he was hungry and thirsty, and, in his intelligent animal way, was wondering on my hard-heartedness in not giving him food and drink. But on my assuring him that it was a case of necessity, he rubbed his nose against my shoulder, as much as to say, "I know it can't be helped, so we must make the best of a bad job." So I untied and led him about from one tuft of grass to another, but after two hours of it I made him fast, and to give him more freedom I tied a cloth on to the reim. Alas for me!

Then I lay down again and tried to sleep, but couldn't. My thoughts, innumerable like the falls of Niagara, swept over me in a mighty, increasing current, and, aided by the relentless little stinging and buzzing fiends, sleep was impossible.

As yet, curiously enough, I had not felt either hungry or thirsty, whether from excitement or what I cannot say. It was now over twelve hours since I had eaten or drunk anything, and I began to feel a sinking. So I tried some bloater, but after a mouthful or two I gave it up, and had a small swig at the cold tea. The bloater and one swig led to another, and when I had half finished the bottle I put it away and began my second cigar. This did not last so well as the first, and when I had smoked it to the bitter end, I ruminated, or tried to.

It had now grown chilly, so I gathered a lot of wood into a heap and soon had a glorious blaze, which had the effect of waking up some birds in a bush close by. At least, I imagine so, or whether it was that, like myself, they were having a restless night, and mistook my fire for the rising sun, is a conjecture I throw in. Whatever the reason, they chattered and chirruped for several minutes; then discovering their error, I presume, they once more grew silent.

At last, the heat of the fire drove the midges away, and me into sleep; but not for long, yet quite long enough for mischief to befall. A sudden intuition warning me that something had gone wrong, I awoke with a start, and looked, but there was no pony; rubbed my eyes and had another look, yet no pony. Walked over to the bush, and found the cloth fastened to the bush, with a piece out of it, at the end where I had tied it to the reim. I searched in every direction without finding him, and finally gave it up as useless, and resigned myself to Kismet.

"A bad business this," I muttered.

"Very. Couldn't be much worse, if you ask me; but what's the odds, so long as it's out of the common?" was the shadow's cavilling comment.

It was now 5.30 a.m., and a faint blush in the east was the only indication I had of what direction I was to follow. I knew that Macloutsie lay almost due east of Pilapwie, and that Taopsi was slightly north of this line; but I did not know from Adam where I was. However, putting the saddle on my head, and slinging my coat, haversack, and rifle over my shoulders, I started off towards the blush of dawn, that had now grown almost crimson. The bush all round was dense; but the morning air was brisk, and I was fresh; so in spite of my encumbrances, I walked on at a good pace. Soon Sol appeared, like a great globe on fire; and the dews which had fallen in the night, and were now enshrouding us in wavy curtains of grey mist, melted away before the fervour of his glance into ethereal space. So I shaped my way accordingly, a point or two north of the sun, as I thought, in the direction of Taopsi; but as the ground was low-lying and flat, I could see nothing.

But everything about me seems so joyous. The birds are piping, the doves cooing, animals calling, insects humming; the foliage, after its bath of pearly dew, shivers and quivers to a very gentle breeze that is rustling through it, and wooing it now softly, like a lover serenading, now as a more passionate swain clinging to it, with a movement that sends a pleasing quaver into its very soul, that thrills it with a musical cadence sweetly delicious.

The air is full of the perfumed aroma of purity and freshness, and of the fragrance of wild flowers, which exhilarate, while the glorious combination of colours charms my senses. All Nature, in fact, is stirred and filled with the joy of awakened life; and out of gratitude for the enforced silence of night, she fills the air with her glorious music. But how can I describe it?

It is the music of the sweet-scented zephyrs, and of the life that lives in them, and of the rushing, roaring hurricanes, sweeping everything before them to death and destruction.

It is the music of the tossing, restless waves, which I can see and hear distinctly, rolling towards me in wavy undulations, or swelling softly, as the lover with emotion, now tumbling in lazily and leisurely, with smooth, slow swell, then crested with white foam curling in frothy confusion, and

chasing one another like a legion of white racers in a mad handicap for life. Stirred once more to the core and centre of its fathomless depths ; again smiling before me, blue and beautiful, with a faint and lovely ripple.

A hush ! a lull !

Then heaven and earth join together in one grand chorus of joy and gladness, while the feathered songsters make the welkin echo and re-echo with their sweet and silvery-toned solos.

Nature, think I to myself, is always beautiful, and in the glorious spring-time of her existence she is superb ; but with a new life she is simply sublime ; while with all her elements let loose in individual discord, to unite in sweet concord, is harmony incomparable and inimitable : defying man's servile imitation, which is only second-hand inspiration. Wild, weird, and uproarious it may be to our untrained and untried ears, but with a greatness and a grandeur in it that no man will ever grasp or comprehend—not in this existence, at any rate.

Such is the music, the soul-stirring morning anthem of the spheres, I heard rising, falling, swelling, chanting, overpowering my senses with its intoxicating beauty, as I walked on gaily, refreshed and invigorated, a new man. And when it ended, as suddenly as it began, placing my burden on the ground and uncovering my head, I stood still, looking eastward, wrapped in the deep silence of unuttered prayer !

After two hours' steady walking, I came to an open rise, and there, almost straight in front of me, a point more north, perhaps, a high hill seemed to shoot up from the general level of expanse all round, towering like a giant sentinel over the puny excrescences beneath.

“Taopsi, for a level thousand !” I exclaimed.

“Look well before you decide,” came from No. 2 in a surly tone.

There being nowhere else to make for that I could see, I settled the impedimenta more comfortably, and made for the hill in a bee line. Another couple of hours at a steady pace went by, and it became quite obvious that the country was by no means a dead level, as it had first appeared, but a succession of low ridges, a wave of undulations, in fact, clad with dark foliage ; and no sooner had I climbed one than I found myself ascending another, and having got out of one hollow, I was into the next before I knew where I was. It was quite impossible to steer a straight course, and in order to avoid bushes and rocks, I careered along very much after

the zigzag course of a fork of lightning, so that it was no easy matter to keep the direction, for between the rises I lost sight of the landmark, of which I only got occasional glimpses from the summit. The worst feature of it all was that I seemed to get no nearer.

Walking through a valley where the grass was greener and higher, I almost trod upon a big boar with fine tusks, who startled me for a moment as he rushed away at a tremendous rate, and was out of sight by the time I had disburdened myself. The morning sun was rather trying, but the freshness was pleasant and stimulating until ten a.m., when it began to wear off, and towards midday the glow of the heat commenced to grow unpleasant. The small drop of tea had long since gone, and I was feeling uncomfortable.

For seven hours I had been walking, and I reckoned that I had covered close on twenty miles. My pace, which for the first three hours had been about three and a half miles an hour, and for the last four two and a half, had now slowed down to two. In every likely place, in sprouts and hollows, in crannies and crevices in the rocks, I looked for water, but not a drop could I find. Once I thought I had got some in a small depression on a large boulder, but it proved to be a mirage on a very tiny scale, though the rock had the appearance of having been recently rained on.

Presently I came to an open glade, and right in front of me I saw a small crowd of sparrows in a circle, chattering and fluttering in a state of the greatest excitement, as if their equilibrium had been upset by something unusual and exceptional, and on my getting close to them, with one exception they all flew away. Thinking it was very tame, I walked up to it, and then, to my surprise, I saw that the cause of it all was a small snake in a striking attitude, that, by means of its cruel beady eyes, had fascinated the poor wee birdie, who was staring at it open-mouthed, its eyes fixed, and its body quivering all over. In a moment the butt end of my rifle had fallen upon the offending head of the venomous little reptile, which was not more than a foot long, and, the spell being broken, birdie flew away and joined his companions in a paean of uproarious thanksgiving. Crushing the head of the snake with my heel to make certain of its present fate, I walked on, comforted with the reflection that my loss had been sparrow's gain ; and though I had come a long way out of my way to do it, I had saved one little life, at all events.

At last I came to a spruit rather larger than any I had so far crossed ; so, unshackling myself, I took out my knife and dug for water in two or three places, but the sand in the bed of the stream was as dry as Scotch chaff, and each grain was individually dry, and not a particle of moisture anywhere. Then I made up stream, but how far I went I cannot say, not more than a mile, I should think, though to me it appeared more like ten, in the loose, heavy, broiling sand. The state of my tongue and mouth was simply terrible, and for a drop of water I would have sold my soul ; but in my case it was dryness, dryness everywhere, and not a drop to drink. However, here was nothing to tantalise, and a spark of sympathy from me went out to the sea-tossed mariner, a waif on the briny ocean, but it was only momentary. The heat was intense—the sun shining down pitilessly was bad, but the glare striking upward was worse ; still I stumbled and sometimes staggered along, my one and sole determination now being water !

“What do you think of it now, Arthur Glyn Leonard ?” sneered my sarcastic other self; but, without deigning to reply, I pushed on, and, coming round a bend a short way ahead, I saw a small bush scherm.

Hope, that was nearly stifled within me, now began to revive, for this looked to me like a drinking-place, the scherm having been put up for protection from the cattle. Redoubling my efforts, you can imagine my utter disgust at finding the pool a puddle that was fast drying up.

Losing no time, however, I set to work in a spot that looked more humid, and after scooping out about two feet of sand, I struck water.

Oh, the joy of that drink ! Words of mine cannot picture it. It was not very clear, and not very cool, warm in fact, but converting the top of my old smasher hat into a receptacle, I drank draught after draught, until I felt quite another being, and that awful shadow grew quite perky again. Filling my water-bottle, I returned gaily to where I had left my gear, and slinging it over my back, I resumed my tramp with a springy step, but not for long. For now the sun had grown more merciless than ever in its intensity, and the ground underneath, which was baking fiercely, made my feet burn unpleasantly. The impedimenta, which for some time had been irksome, was now getting intolerable. The effect of all the water I had imbibed had soon worn away, the pint had long since been

consumed, and I had come across no more. The hill seemed nearly as far off as ever. What with frequent changes and constant halts, my pace had dwindled down to a mile an hour, and with it my second self evaporated, not unlike a morning mist ; while thought, which had overmastered me during the darkness, now left me to struggle against all my difficulties with only one dominating idea, and that was to gain the goal by hook or by crook. Labouring up a rise, where I took a long breath, it appeared to me as if at length the stretch between myself and the hill was less.

Slowly, onward yet ever onward, I trudged with my teeth set, as the sun was on its downward course, when suddenly I found myself on the telegraph track, in a valley which gradually ascended to my goal.

Placing the saddle carefully on the fork of a tree where I knew I could find it, but sticking to my rifle, with renewed exertions I went forward, and it was as the sun was sinking into the west that I stumbled into Taopsi signal station, and, tired as I was, I watched it sinking into a cloudy creation of unrivalled splendour and magnificence—into a boundless sea of fantastic shapes, worlds of phantom and fantasy, a reflex of the great Infinity beyond, as it rolls and stretches without end. I have little more to add. Knight and White seemed in no way surprised by my absence, as to be lost in the veldt is nothing unusual—a common occurrence in fact. But my pony, Punch, to shew his delight at my return, cocked his ears, neighed, and rubbed his nose affectionately against my face. Next morning, picking up my saddle, we rode on, and in the evening, although the men had been this way several times, we lost ourselves for about three hours—Knight saying the road lay one way, White declaring it was almost in the opposite direction. Striking a happy medium, and judging by the position of some stars, I took a middle course which brought us safe to our destination.

Except that we saw some baboons and ostriches, and came across a species of sweet lemon, we had no further adventures, and after a very enjoyable ride, in spite of my experience, we arrived at Macloutsie the day following.

CHAPTER XVII.

MACLOUTSIE.

From 28th November to 8th December, 1890.

IT is very amusing sometimes to listen to the men talking, and I cannot do better than commence this scribble by giving you the essence of a conversation I heard the other day between Troopers Egan and James.

They are both tall, wiry-looking fellows, but while the former is quick and smart, the latter is slow and heavy ; and while Egan, who hails from the south of Ireland, is full of blarney, and a Catholic, James is a Cornish miner belonging to the Church of England, and very matter-of-fact and precise. Two such totally opposite extremes would be hard to find.

It was over a final polish-up of their accoutrements and a pipe, that they drifted into a discussion on the merits and demerits of their respective Churches—quite a friendly discussion this time, and on the side of the Cornishman in downright earnest, for you must not run away with the idea that we are a quarrelsome lot. Indeed, taking us all round, and considering everything, we are a remarkably quiet set.

James was the first to commence, and very abusive he became not of the Romish faith, but of his own Church ; and the point on which he was particularly warm was the support of the Establishment falling principally on the parish instead of on the "haristocracy," as he called them, for whom the Church existed, as they got most out of it in fat preferments, and against whom he was, in consequence, righteously indignant.

"Why, I knows a parson in a parish down where I lives who draws £1800 every year out of tithes, and if I'se had my way," said he, waxing wroth, "I wudn't give him ten shillings, that I wudn't ; he isn't worth it."

"We're right there, me boy," chimed in Egan, "and it's mighty well they look, on their tithes and preferments ; but

yours is not the only rich man's Church, I 'm thinking ; for what do ye say about me own Papish religion ? ”

“ Jest the one for a poor man, if you ask me, mate.”

“ But not intirely, Mavourneen. Shure an' ye forget the Pater's-pence and the divil's own fines that they livy on us poor gossoons ; and faix, if ye dhraw a comparishun betwixt the two, there's not sich a mighty differensh after all, at all ! Not forgetting the masses, be jabers ! Shure, didn't they ruin me intirely, having to buy my poor old mother out of Purgathory ! And isn't it that that brought me out to these savage parts ? ”

But James would not be convinced, and the last words I heard, as they hurried off to stables, were—“ Devil a bit, me boy, devil a bit ; there's not the tosh up of a head or harp between them.”

Now, who was right ? The sanguine Paddy, if you ask me ; but without discussing the merits of any religion, all of which I respect equally, the contemplation of this stolid beef-eater finding an outlet for his thoughts in the inequality and injustice of his religion sets me thinking again on the complex nature of humanity in general, and on the peculiarly conflicting elements in the English character : the strong under-current of religion running side by side with a tidal wave of hypocrisy, and through them both a vein of justice and fair-play, while uppermost, and above all, the mastering and overmastering passion. There is nothing apparently religious about this man, whose sole object here is to find gold when he gets the chance, and yet deep down in his organism lies this moral and disputative tendency. For religion is nothing if not argumentative !

Since my little adventure a reaction has set in, and I have had quite a reading-fit pass over me. Light literature, all of it, as books up here are scarce. Amongst others, *Love Me for Ever*, by Robert Buchanan—the first I have ever read of his. It is a curious story, decidedly melodramic, far-fetched, and fanciful, but well written and in choice language ; still, I have not made up my mind whether or not I like his style.

Another that has interested me is *The Way we Live Now*, by Anthony Trollope. How dry, prosy, and long-winded he is, but yet how realistic and true to life, and so I love dear, prosy old Anthony, and read through every line of his books ; and in Roger Carbury, I find a character immeasurably rich in nobility, but extremely rare in these degenerate days, alas !

There is yet another that I can scarcely call light, although

not deep, and that is *Pepys' Diary*. I commenced it on the 28th, and the betting, in long odds I believe, is that I never wade through a half, much less finish the whole, but I have sworn to do it or perish in the attempt, and as yet I have only read a dozen pages.

Some weeks ago I bought a couple of fine donkeys, and during my absence at Pilapwie, one of them has thrown a foal. Such a dear, woolly little thing, with long, fluffy ears, and large expressive eyes. I have christened her Tibby in remembrance of the tiny waif I picked up in the bush, some two or three days after the fight at Teb.

I happened to be returning with some camels from Tokar, when I heard a feeble kind of bleating in a bush close by, and telling one of my men to look, in a few minutes he came to me carrying a little donkey-foal, that could not have been more than a week old. The poor little thing was nearly half-dead, and had evidently been left behind, when the Hadendowas, having been utterly crushed by our force, had retreated in the direction of Tokar.

I brought it back to Trinkitat with me, and managed to keep it alive on milk. At first I gave it goat's, that I was able to procure, and which I had to pour down its throat in spoonfuls, but finding that the wee thing did not seem to thrive on it, on the third day I gave it some Anglo-Swiss condensed milk. This it seemed to like better, and after a few days of care and trouble, the little mite began to lap up the milk on its own account, with the result that it very soon picked up, and in the course of two or three months grew into a remarkably fine little donkey. Taking him back to Cairo, I christened him Teb, after the fight, and kept him for a long time at the Hotel Royal, where he became a general favourite. He was a great pet of mine, and quite devoted to me, following me about and answering to his name like a dog, and I must say, I was genuinely sorry on my return to England, to leave the affectionate little animal behind. Much against my will I handed Teb over to a sais of mine, and my only consolation was that he was more kindly-hearted than the majority of his countrymen. I have never again set eyes on little Teb, but if, in this hard world of realities, a wish can blossom into an act of kindness, or a kindly thought turn into a golden action, then this little donkey life ought to have been one perpetual merry-go-round of happiness, for I have never forgotten him, and often in the stillness of night, or in the turmoil of an active career, I have thought of his affection

and intelligence, and how well he repaid me for a simple act of humanity, so my sympathy has been his and I have wished him well. Ah, how little do we understand the dumb intelligence of animals, and still less do we appreciate their wondrous fidelity and devotion. If we could but see them as they are, and not as we think them, and if, with the courage of our convictions, we would but acknowledge that it is our own mismanagement, and frequently ill-treatment, which is at fault, a better time and humarer life for all animals, but the down-trodden ass in particular, would be the result.

We flatter ourselves that reason raises us above the brute beasts, as we so wrongly call them; I think, and yet how many of those same beasts have more intelligence and nobler qualities than we, with our deepest philosophy and boasted wisdom, have ever dreamt of! And what splendid lessons we could learn, if we only took the trouble to study them: lessons of nobility in their patience, fidelity, and devotion to man as well as among themselves, and of economy in thrift, diligence, and a dozen other such excellent qualities! Brute beasts they may be in our poor estimation, because of their mental inferiority and moral deficiency, but it is on these very grounds all the more reasonably incumbent on our part, as the stronger vessels, to care for and protect the weaker! And it is high time for the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to expand its ideas and extend its labours!

What our duty is to all animals—especially those which are useful to us—is, I think, perfectly clear. As the human unit of that vast universe of Nature, *i.e.* the portion raised by the will of God, the supreme Being, as many of us believe, or evolved, as others assert, out of the chaos and confusion of matter, by the iron force of tyrannical circumstance and condition over the remaining kingdoms, through the force of intellect and reason, which enables us to distinguish or divide good from evil, and discriminate between moral obligations and bestial instincts, it is manifestly our duty and responsibility—our birthright, no matter whence our creation or evolution—to care for and cherish all life that we are pleased to look on as brutish and bestial.

Whether, as Darwin asserts, our descent is distinctly traceable from the ape or not, our responsibilities are in no way diminished. Looking at the physical aspect of the question, there is much to be said in favour of his splendid theories, worked out as they are with all the logical reasoning of excep-

tional genius ; but an evolution upwards, such as ours, points distinctly to a something more than this—to an ascent from the ordinary level of animal instincts to the higher platform of mental and moral intelligence. But inspired as all Nature is by the one eternal fountain-head, God, the source of all life, it is more reasonable to suppose that, in and from Him, we have our common origin. And just as life has its stages and phases, so it has its grades, classes, and kingdoms, each one differing in external form, separate and divisible through the agency of a spiritually internal force, yet connected indissolubly by the common bond which inspires and unites all Nature. Hence it is that Shakespeare says :

“And the poor beetle that we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.”

Monkeys and dogs are admittedly the most intelligent of the animal kingdom, and the fact of the latter possessing consciences, a fact which Darwin and Agassiz both maintain, points undoubtedly to the possession of a moral sense. With all our boasted scientific knowledge, however, aided by a consensus of the giant intellects of humanity, we could not train up or educate a dog or a monkey into a human specimen—transfer them, in fact, out of their own distinctly-defined classes of a distinctly-defined kingdom into the higher kingdom of man, a transformation with a vengeance, disclosing as it would the secret of all life and the mystery of all mysteries. It were more feasible and possible to train down, deteriorate, and demoralise man into an animal, more sensual, degraded, and brutish because of this very descent into an intelligent animal—witness bushmen, or the race of African dwarfs seen by Stanley, who are little removed from this—than it would be to raise the most intelligent animal to the high level of humanity. High, in spite of the great force of evil, with its attendant sins and vices, which at times lower and degrade it to the lowest depths of animalism.

What difference, however, it makes to the point at issue, except as an undoubtedly interesting scientific fact, I, for my part, confess I cannot see. For whether they or we have sprung from the same common source or not, in no way affects the question, or detracts one iota from our manifestly hereditary duties towards them, but, on the contrary, increases our responsibility all the more—duties which we have inherited from the first man, Adam, when he tilled the ground and

named the animals. Mere tradition, says the sceptic. . . . Granted ; but is not all early history tradition ? Is not even recent history contradictory, looked at from the individual standpoint of party politics, as well as from the moral and social tenets of the writer, coloured tangibly by his own innate convictions, and by the outward profession of narrow denominational religion ? The dull flicker of a rushlight is not to be compared to the brilliant soft transparency of electric light ; but better the uncertain dimness of a farthing dip than total darkness. The Mosaic traditions may not be inspired in the true spiritual sense of inspiration, but that they are the smoke of volcanic fires which once existed countless ages ago, with all the vital force and plenitude of living power, seems to me a very reasonable hypothesis—an hypothesis which is very considerably strengthened by the universality of the story of the Creation, the record of which exists among races that have never even heard of the Bible. That they are only forgeries, mere fiction, which emanated from the plotting brain of some scholastic priest belonging to the great Temple, is altogether unlikely, the correctness of the genealogical tables and of the chronological order of events and dynasties being enough to upset this theory.

Again, whether we believe in creation or evolution, the unalterable fact remains, that not only do we possess the ordinary animal instincts of existence, propagation, and self-preservation, but that in our temperaments we have certain characteristics, the very essence of which is purely animalistic. Carnal lusts, lewdness, passions, and such like sensualities of the flesh, which we give way to, the heart-rending brutalities and cruelties that occur daily in our midst to women and children—what are they but the instinct of animal passion gaining the mastery, the triumph of matter over mind, ending frequently in an unhealthy taste for blood, and in a morbid craving for murder ? What is so-called sport often turned into but battues ? In other words, mere butchery in cold blood. What, after all, is cannibalism but an animal desire for food, which, owing to moral obliquity, recognises no difference or distinction between the flesh of its own or other species. Finally, what is it that demoralises a man more than anything else, but a reversion of the regular order of natural laws, the subjugation of the moral by the physical ? which is nothing but a retrograde downward movement to the animal.

What our duties to the animal kingdom are, as I have said before, is as clear as daylight—duties which, if not hereditary

are, at all events, morally imposed on us, and all the more binding on that account. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has a most necessary and estimable object in view; but if it were possible to extend its operations by act of Parliament, and I see no reason against it, to a general supervision over the care and management of all animals, or, better still, if inspectors were appointed for the purpose by legislation, from a humane point of view, such a measure would in every way tend to ameliorate their lot. For our duty is not only to protect the dumb and loyal creatures who toil for us incessantly with a nobility of uncomplaining patience, humility, and fidelity, amounting to a devotion beyond all praise, but to care for and improve them morally and physically. And, surely, if from nothing else but a small compensation for their utility, we should return such animals as dogs, horses, cows, donkeys, mules, etc., more especially, a sympathy which they seek and a kindness which they reciprocate by willing work, submission, and faithfulness, and the two former particularly by a love and devotion which is unparalleled and unsurpassable in human annals.

But surely there is much magnetism in a good wish or thought, and if not there ought to be. Or is it that the electric current fails to reach its destination, owing to the adverse nature of the medium that conveys it, or because it receives a check from an inimical current running counter to it?

Certainly so-called memory, that moral effort of the mind, is an eccentric faculty. A far-off microscopic mirror that, viewed at a distance, reveals on its surface mere shadowy spectres, an indistinct blurr of infinite specks that, when seen by the medium of telescopic vision, through the endless tunnel of Time, stand out in clear and bold relief, as facts and objects of a former (?) life that have been relegated to the past, or thrown in a bundle behind us, like so many scraps of waste material, by the onward march of Time, that ceaseless lacquey to eternity, who waits for no man, but rushes recklessly on, regardless of consequences, into the great void of the future, always inevitable and impending, yet apparently never nearer by a single moment? Facts that are recalled into a state of mental existence by the merest chance or coincidence, or revoked by the recurrence of a simple trifle.

But is this so, and why do we divide time into past, present, and future? If it is eternal, is it not one long and infinite stretch of ethereal elasticity, or a circlet of elastic electricity,

that stretches and revolves, and keeps on stretching and revolving, ceaseless and endless, for ever and always? and are not these divisions of our own making, and for our own convenience, simply to enable us to measure it?

Surely it is a perpetual motion, revolving as does the earth round its own centre axis of gravity, and is not the past chasing the present, as the present does the future? I wonder! I wonder! And will it be all the same 100 years hence? Ay, and a thousand hundred on the top of it, and another hundred thousand upon that again! What then is memory? Is it as we thought above? or is this incessant repetition of what we call past events a chain of actions belonging to the one life, which are merely revolving around it, and to which memory, like a magnet, draws them at her imperious but erratic will and pleasure? And is not memory merely a name that, groping in the dark, we have picked up, and attached to a singular attribute, the real significance of which lies beyond our dull and uneducated comprehension?

Whatever it is, however, a mere retention in the mind of a bygone act or not, all I know is, that a puny incident in connection with an insignificant animal keeps constantly recurring to me without the slightest effort on my part, and a very pleasing reminiscence it always is, while the mere fact of seeing a tiny donkey just brought into being has evoked a train of curious thought, and, O ye gods and little fishes, all because of another little donkey!

Campbell, who passed through a short time back with despatches from Colquhoun, has returned, and is on his way back to Salisbury. Speaking about the Manica difficulty, he says that we are going to withdraw our troops. The prospectors are, however, to be left to scatter all over the country, and, of course, it will be quite impossible to find them should the occasion arise. A case of Little Bo Peep and her lost sheep again, a Rhodesian edition of blind man's buff. Surely our fair and square policy, on which we prided ourselves so much, is quickly developing into a game of fast and loose, and yet there is a spice about it that is very amusing!

Vague rumours have reached us on and off, about a certain amount of friction existing between Colquhoun and Jameson. Campbell confirms them, and from what he says, Pennefather is also opposed to the former, but in a very small way, I should imagine. It has been a puzzle to me what official position Jameson occupies. I know he is a shareholder in the Company,

and a bosom friend of Rhodes, and as such I thought he was up here to send him a confidential report of the prospects. Campbell states that as Rhodes' representative, he has powers to control the Administrator. But this strikes me as altogether absurd, for having Cecil's confidence as he has, there was nothing to prevent his being appointed Administrator in the first instance, and yet it looks very much as if he were trying to oust Colquhoun from his position. If so, why not get rid of him right away? Difficulties in the way, I suppose. Easy enough to say that honesty is the best policy, but carrying it out is putting quite another complexion on the matter. Yet there must be something more at the bottom of it all than meets the casual eye, I am thinking.

At last we have received orders to march to Tuli, to relieve Turner's troop, who go on to Charter! Oh, the wild delirium of joy that prevails, and the mad capers, frolics, and antics in consequence! What a weathervane and glass is this nature of ours, veering round the compass of our mind, driven here and there by breezy ideas, or at the beck and call of sedater thoughts, which have a vent in words and actions, that are merely outward indications of inner consciousness. As usual we are short of transport, and there is none available, except some waggons of the B.B.P., which I hope to get out of MacAdam, who is now in command, during Grey's absence on leave.

The weather for the past few days has been quite keen and wintry, and unless some skittish zephyr from the icy haunts of Borea is playing truant, I do not know how to account for it.

This evening Harford and I walked round the garden that not so long ago gave us one little treat, to find it a wilderness of weeds and desolation, ruined by insects, field rats, want of rain and Malherbe's absence (whom, you will remember, I sent away to drive Rhodes to Tuli, and whom I could not replace). What hopes I had centred in this half-acre of vegetation! all to be shattered by remediable causes, I suppose, if we only knew how to apply the remedies. Macpherson has gone down country, on leave, in view of retiring. Turner, who some time ago passed here on his way to Pilapwie, has driven through to Tuli.

On my return from hospital this afternoon, where I had a talk with Brown, who is seedy, I met Veitch, and he shewed me a tree-frog that he had just found in Nesbitt's hut. It is a tiny creature with large, expressive eyes, out of proportion to its size, and it is quite pathetic to hear it squealing, for all the world like a sickly infant just born, only not quite so lustily.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TULI.

MY TROOP MARCH FOR TULI.

From 9th to 15th December, 1890.

WE are at Tuli, and I can hardly say that we have gained much, if at all, by the change, but of this hereafter.

To go back, our heavy baggage got off on the 9th inst. at 6 a.m., and the troop at midday, under Capper. But they had only got to the Macloutsie when down came the rain at 6.30 p.m., keeping on steadily until after midnight, accompanied by vivid lightning and loud thunder.

I was feeling very poorly, so remained behind with the B.B.P., putting up in Brown's hut until it leaked so much that I had to take refuge with Pemberton. Feeling better next day, I said good-bye to Mother Patrick, the sisters, Father Prestige, and all the B.B.P., and started at 5 p.m., on Punch, to overtake the troop. Nesbitt was with me, and, as the ground was well soaked, and heavy from the rain, we knew they could not have got very far, so took it easy. And we were right, for we passed the waggons on the way, reaching Lipokwe at 7.30 p.m., a good two hours before they did. Here we stayed for the night, and Capper told me that they had a very rough time of it on the previous night, as the waggons stuck in the Macloutsie drift, the bullocks lost heart, or grew obstinate, and would not pull, while, to make matters worse, the rain fell on the top of it all, soaking them to the skin, and drenching everything.

The following day nothing unusual occurred, and we trekked along slowly but steadily, outspanning two and a half miles beyond the cross-roads, so called because of a track that runs from the Crocodile river to Tati, across the Macloutsie-Tuli road; and, on the evening of the 12th, we reached Semelale, halting there on the 13th, to rest and recruit the oxen, who are in wretched condition. In fact, this is the worst march, as regards transport, I have ever made, and I have had, as you know, a very fair share of experience with every conceivable kind under the sun. We have no spare gear or animals, and

the gear we have is rotten; so, what with roads made heavy by the late rain, and waggons too heavily laden, breakdowns and delays have been frequent, and, to make matters worse, judging from appearances, I am afraid that we shall have more rain before we reach Tuli. Waggons are all very well for heavy goods, but give me good camel or mule transport for a march.

I must not forget to tell you a rather amusing little incident that occurred to Harford and Sergeant Withers on the evening of the 11th. I gave them both permission, until the following day, to get some sport, and they started with the avowed intention of returning with game enough to feed the whole troop. About midnight, however, as I was lying half asleep, the noise of people coming into camp awoke me, and I found that it was Harford and Withers who had just ridden in.

"What in the name of wonder has brought you in at this unearthly hour, waking us all up? Have you been chased by a Matabele impi on the war-path, or by a herd of hungry lions?" I asked.

"Neither," replied Harford; "but, by Jove, we sat upon a nest of snakes, and had to make a clean bolt of it."

"Snakes!" I repeated incredulously. "What do you mean?"

"What I say, by Jove! Sergeant Withers and myself rode a long way in the direction of the old Pioneer Camp, until it became dusk, when we knee-haltered the ponies, and selected, as we thought, a nice likely-looking spot, athwart which the huge trunk of a decayed tree was lying. Well, we built up a grand fire on top of it, and while the coffee was roasting in our billies, we proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as possible. Presently a great, black, slimy brute crawled out of the darkness, and curled himself between us and the fire, which was now crackling merrily and blazing brightly.

"We began to feel uncomfortable, I can tell you, as the devil meant staying; and never, until that moment, had I realised the full force of Satan's transmigration of soul into the serpent, for the purpose of tempting Eve, as when I saw its sinuous movements, gliding along noiselessly, a foul and loathsome object. Not many seconds after, Withers gave a jump into the air, and made for the other side of the fire, as another, blacker and slimier than the first, crept through his legs, and joined it; so I followed suit. Not an instant too soon; for I give you my word, the space that we had occupied between the tree and the blaze became simply alive with hissing snakes, stinging scorpions, and other creeping, crawling reptiles."

"But how many snakes were there?"

"We didn't wait to see, by Jove, or if any more were coming ; but at least a dozen had taken possession of the fire ; so thinking it high time to clear, we on-saddled and skedaddled."

"But why didn't you shake down for the night somewhere else?"

"We had had quite enough of it, thank you."

"But not we of the boasted banquet that you promised to provide us." Dead silence for a minute.

"Ah, well, we'll postpone the feast ; but tell me why, in the name of common sense, did you make your fire in the very home of snakes ?" Deader silence.

"And in the future, take my advice, and always avoid dead or decayed trees, as they are the favourite haunts of snakes."

"By Jove, I didn't know," exclaimed Harford ; Withers chiming in, "Neither did I."

Then, as a parting shot, to draw them out, I said, "The idea of two stalwart fellows, belonging to a force with as many letters before its name as a second-rate German prince, seeing snakes at this early stage of your careers, and scuttling from them like red-shanks. A nice pair of soldiers you are !"

"It was enough to make one scuttle, sir."

"It was no joke, by Jove ! The devil himself would have run from them like old boots, had he been there."

"Or got inside by a sleight of soul, in that accommodating way he has," I yawned, as I wished them good-night.

But they have not heard the last of it by any means ; and now, if not seeing snakes, they are continually hearing them. For so human nature is constituted ; humour and good-natured chaff we call it, but with a slight spice of mischievous malice pervading it. And yet most of us persistent chaffers would have felt quite as uncomfortable under the same circumstances, only we would not have had the courage, perhaps, to come into camp, and face the ordeal of unmerciful chaff, as these two did.

Before getting into Semelale, and when we were outspanned for breakfast in the shade of the biggest bush we could find, who should ride up but Jameson and Coleman (the adjutant of the B.B.P.), who accepted our invitation and joined us. Though I had seen Jameson at Macloutsie in the earlier part of the year, I had never had an opportunity of having a long talk with him until now, when he stayed with us for three hours, riding on with Coleman to Tuli.

He spoke very little about Mashonaland or Manica, or about his trip and Johnson's through the latter country and

down the Pungwe River to Beira in a collapsible boat, in which they had a very rough time of it, quite a series of adventures in fact—so we hear, at all events. At Beira they picked up a steamer which brought them to Cape Town, so Jameson has lost no time in coming up here again. He was looking very well on it, however; and one thing I must say I like about him, and which makes me think all the more highly of him, is that he is not bitten with the bounce mania which seems so prevalent in South Africa. In my estimation this is a distinct point in his favour, and in itself raises him above the average run of African humanity.

He told us that he did not think there would be any fighting with the Portuguese, and that the complications about Manica would be settled amicably. Indeed, he spoke most hopefully, and said that by next April he hoped that the Company would have stern wheelers plying on the Pungwe, which is navigable for about a hundred miles from its mouth; while from this point Johnson intended to have coaches for mails and passengers running up to Salisbury, the traffic, of course, on this side being still maintained by waggons as hitherto.

This appears healthy, and does not bear out the rumours we have heard about trouble with the Portuguese, and looks as if everything was working smoothly and there was no hitch whatever. Yet, after discussing various topics, he told me that Pennefather was on his way back post-haste, and that he had no business ever to have gone on leave, as it was his duty to have remained up country, now more so than ever, in the face of Portuguese complications.

I pointed out to him that this did not quite agree with his former statement of amicable settlement, to which he replied, "I am still in hopes that this will be the case, but there is, of course, no knowing what may happen, or how things will turn out, and I was speaking more or less generally on broad principles."

"I entirely agree with you, but you must remember that it was Mr. Rhodes himself who gave the Colonel leave."

"Just so," he replied. "That's Rhodes all over, he never can say 'No.'"

This is a feature in Rhodes' character which entirely escaped me, and a weakness that surprises me all the more in a man of such decided strength as the Colossus. But it must have been, I should say, either an after-dinner promise, extracted from him on the spur of a weak moment, or because he considered that he could dispense with Pennefather's services for the time being;

and yet no one, I suppose, knows him better than Jameson does. It has been a matter of surprise to me all along, that both the commandant and staff officer were allowed to leave Salisbury at what I call such a critical juncture, when everything was in a state of chaotic uncertainty, and before any order or settlement could possibly be arrived at. From what I can see, however, little, if any, sympathy exists between Jameson and Pennefather, and the opinion of the former for the latter, as far as I can make out, is not favourable. Willoughby, on the other hand, stands well with him, not on account of his military capacity, but partly from a social and partly from a business standpoint, and he has taken the opportunity to improve the occasion by working on this advantage to the mutual benefit of himself and Co. In other words, he has gone home as a big advertisement to float companies, and, having plenty of interest and big people behind him, it pays the Co. to give him leave. When I alluded to this, Jameson was reticent, and changed the subject quietly but rapidly. The fact remains, however, that if Pennefather's absence is immoral, Willoughby's is equally so. Neither of them should have been allowed to leave his duties, either on private or public grounds ; and, as one went to see his wife, and the other, presumably, to raise syndicates, they ought to have been obliged to resign their respective positions in the police. Officers more capable were easily obtainable to take their places, for no matter how invaluable a man may be as a tout or a family man, it is making a farce of the whole thing to allow him to retain a military office on active service ; but the reason of this, in Willoughby's case, is plainly evident, namely, to enable him to be seconded from his regiment.

There can be no doubt, I should think, that Jameson is clever and level-headed, and his nationality comes out strong in some of its most pungent characteristics—in caution and shrewdness especially. That he would make a capable administrator, of a new country particularly, I feel sure, for he combines strength with diplomacy, and, while Rhodes' genius lies in large conceptions, he has the capacity to put them into practice, and turn them to useful account.

As a companion he is excellent, lively, amusing, and cheery—one, in fact, who thinks it folly not to be jolly—though not exactly of a refined type, and a trifle coarse-minded perhaps, yet he is most interesting to talk to, simply as a man of marked ability and tact ; but the little passage about Rhodes and Pennefather gave me a truer insight into his character than anything, or all the rest he said.

Semelale is rather low-lying, and the post station ought to have been made higher up on the ridge, but there are some fine large trees, under the grateful shade of which we spent a lazy day. As it happened, I was glad that we had not gone out shooting, and that the snake charmers resisted all efforts on my part to induce them to accompany me, because I should have missed meeting Mundell and his political prisoners, who turned up at midday and left in the afternoon.

Seeing a waggon coming along, I walked towards it, when, to my astonishment, I saw Mundell's tall form striding along just in front of it.

"Hullo, Mundell, where on earth have you sprung from, and where are you off to at this rate?" I asked as we shook hands.

After mutual inquiries about everyone, and everything in general, he informed me that he was on his way down country with two Portuguese prisoners who were captured by Forbes at Umtasa's Kraal, in Manica land, because they were trespassing in our preserves, and threatened to turn us out. It was very amusing to see him chasing D'Andrade round a hut, the latter declaring that no Englishman would take him alive. I can picture the scene as vividly as if I was actually looking at it. Forbes, the very image of a sturdy bull terrier with a pugnacious expression, going, tooth and nail, for D'Andrade, who, like a well-groomed, sagacious poodle, showed his teeth and then thought better of it.

D'Andrade is a colonel in the Portuguese service, a gentleman, and a very nice fellow, Mundell tells me; and he certainly struck me as such when introduced to him later on. He is very swarthy and slight, and, in appearance, not unlike a dark-skinned dancing-master. He is naturally very indignant with the fact of his having been made a prisoner in what he considers is Portuguese territory, by mere filibusters, acting on the orders of an able adventurer without receiving the countenance of the British Government. Working himself up into a pitch of intense excitement, he informed me, in good English, that he knew Mr. Gladstone, and that he has great influence at the European Courts, which he intends exerting to his utmost; and if this does not lead to international complications, he swore, by many gods who were strange and unknown to me, that he would raise heaven and the other place!

What a horrid nuisance excitability of temperament must be, either individually or nationally; and here was a man who, on the mere memory of what had happened, and in anticipation of the rumpus he is contemplating, converts himself into

an insensate fury on a hot day, and at the risk of bursting a blood-vessel. If all the Portuguese are as peppery as he is, what a rumpus will take place on his arrival in Lisbon, and when he has inflamed them to his own pitch of pepperiness by a relation of his wrongs.

Gouveia, who is a general and a marquis in the Portuguese service, was dressed in a striped sleeping-suit of various colours, and appeared to be rather a retiring, mild-mannered, old half-caste gentleman—a thorough-bred Goanese ; a class of people that are sometimes employed as cooks or boys in India, who make a great profession of being Catholics and Christians, and a great show of being Europeans ; a degraded, demoralised lot, who, in nine cases out of ten, are discharged for either drunkenness or dishonesty, and who, as a rule, are only employed by new arrivals.

This man is a notorious slave-dealer and villain, and virtually ruler of the whole of Manica, but you would not think so by his looks, which evidently belie him, and his placidity was in marked contrast to D'Andrade's irritability. Whether he could talk much English or not, I do not know ; but he kept aloof from everybody, and shewed no desire to talk.

On the 14th we outspanned at Baobab Spruit for breakfast, and at 11 a.m. Tye rode in with Coleman, who went on to Macloutsie, Tye returning to Tuli, for which place the troop started at 3 p.m., all the waggons, except one that broke down in a spruit, getting in by 8 p.m. Starting from Macloutsie in a downpour, we finished at Tuli in tremendous rain, thoroughly drenched, and some of our baggage damaged. As we got in long before the waggons, I got into Turner's things, and I literally did get into them, for he is 6 feet 2 inches, and slight ; and you would have laughed to see me with trousers and sleeves turned up, and coat hanging down to my knees.

Yet, in spite of the rain, what with meeting Jameson, D'Andrade, the black marquis, and the snakes, our march on the whole proved remarkably pleasant. Have just heard from Moffatt at Buluwayo, who informs me that two men, by name Hassforther and Wimble, who have been making mischief there against the Government and the Company, are now on their way back to the Transvaal *via* Tuli, and he advises me to keep a look out for them, as their intention is to make more trouble if they can. So we are naturally on the *qui vive*, as any excitement that is out of the common adds a zest to the infinite staleness of the daily round.

CHAPTER XIX.

TULI.

D TROOP LEAVE FOR VICTORIA.

From 16th to 31st December, 1890.

JAMESON had already left for Salisbury when we got to Tuli, and Tye tells me that, before leaving, he shewed him his power of attorney to act for Rhodes, which empowers him to do what he thinks fit and right. This, surely, is placing the Administrator in an utterly false position. Why, then, I repeat, does Rhodes keep on Colquhoun?

D Troop crossed the Tuli drift on the evening of the 16th, marching as far as Ipagee on the following day. Tye, Nesbitt, and myself, rode out, and stayed with them for the night, returning the next morning, after seeing the last of Turner and Codrington. I am afraid that they will have a bad time of it, as evidently the rains have commenced, and I do not envy them, with swollen rivers and a heavy road.

I am beginning to like this place better than I did, although it is lower, hotter, and unhealthier than Macloutsie, for, in spite of the fort being on the spur of a hill, it is in the valley of the river, and runs down to within 400 yards of the western bank. It stands, in fact, in a hollow basin surrounded on all sides by hills, many of which are higher, so that against artillery fire it would be nothing more or less than a shell trap. It suits our purpose very well, however, and is naturally star-shaped, the parapet being built according to the configuration of the ground, making the perimeter too extensive, which is a drawback, as it would require a garrison of 400 men to defend it properly, and our strength is under a hundred.

In other ways it has some advantages over Macloutsie for the men, as the water of the river is a great deal nearer, so that bathing is much easier. For my own part, however, both from a military and sanitary point of view, I should have selected a site on the opposite bank of the river, building a block-house on the present position, to hold in case of necessity.

What I like best of all about the fort is the splendid view obtainable from it, and it is the river, with its thin, silvery

stream winding along, in the form of a huge snake, that throws light and life into the scene, which enhances its beauty.

Coming down from the north, out of rugged tree-clad hills, it makes a splendid sweep, at a breadth varying from a quarter to half a mile; then, flowing in a southerly direction past the fort, it describes once more a beautiful curve to the east, where it is lost to view in a deep, dark gorge amongst the hills.

When the river is full from bank to bank, which, I am informed, is only occasionally, during an exceptionally heavy rainy season, the sight must be really worth seeing from the highest point of the fort, which commands the view all round.

Tye shewed me a wire from his crony Harris, that had come up by post-cart from Pilapwie, to the effect that the Portuguese Government had on the 10th inst. ordered a gunboat and soldiers to Beira from Delagoa Bay.

Now what does this mean? Hardly like the peaceful settlement that Jameson spoke of, and yet we are so kept in the dark as to what is going on, that it is very hard to say, and you at home probably know far more about it than we do. Do the Portuguese mean business, and will they fight us over Manica, knowing our numerical weakness? I should not be surprised. Stranger things have happened before now, and they are very excited and angry with us. Besides, when D'Andrade and Gouveia relate their experiences, and the indignity put upon them by seizing and imprisoning them, their fury will know no bounds. Red pepper and fireworks will not be in it.

Laurie, of the B.B.P., turned up here for breakfast (22nd), his boots worn out, his clothes torn, and his face all blistered by the sun, looking altogether an awful ruffian. He has been out shooting for the last fortnight in the Lippkole hills, and, among other things, shot a giraffe. He returned to Tuli the following day, Hannay and Goody going with him on duty, while Carr Ellison, and Browne, also of the B.B.P., who rode in yesterday evening, have gone out with Capper along the Shashi, to see what game they can pick up.

24th, at midday, I received the following helio from Pennefather, who has evidently left Pilapwie: "Expect me Friday. Tell Hannay to look up Maxim guns. Graves must go at once to Fort Victoria. Turner must remain at Fort Charter until further orders. A troop must concentrate at Salisbury, and your troop must go there when relieved at Charter by B troop. Shew these orders to Tye, and forward by special messenger to each fort. Faulkner must continue to strengthen Victoria." Does this mean that the fire-eating Portuguese

have been so carried away by their feelings that they intend fighting us? I can scarcely believe it, and yet I should not be surprised if we were at it hammer and tongs before long. After all they are right if they think that they have only the Company to tackle, for we are none too strong up above; and we have undoubtedly given them a *casus belli*, for we have jumped Manica in rather a bare-faced way. Or can it, I wonder, have anything to do with the Matabele?

In any case, the message cannot have been helio'd correctly, because if my troop goes up country, who is to hold this place? There is not a word about the B.B.P. relieving me, and this place as our base must be held, for the chances are that if we have a collision with the Portuguese, the Matabele would attack us. Besides, whatever happens, B troop would remain at Salisbury; and for B, I take it, D is meant, and F, who are now at Charter, would also go on to the former place.

Christmas-Day.—As I thought, yesterday's helio was wrong, for the post came in to-day, and with it I received a letter from Pennefather in confirmation of his helio. In consequence we remain here, F troop goes to Salisbury when relieved by Turner. He very much surprised me, however, by writing to say that before many weeks were over, we were likely to have a row with the Matabele. Not because I considered it improbable, as you know, for I have all along expected it, and advocated caution and readiness, but partly because my thoughts were set in quite an opposite direction, the Portuguese, and partly because I was of opinion that their time was not yet ripe. It seemed to me that they would wait until after the harvest, *i.e.* about the end of February, or in March, but dependent entirely on the rains, when it appears they have a kind of huge festival, in celebration of the harvest, at Buluwayo, feasting, drinking, and dancing themselves into such a state of excitement, so as to bring out all the instincts of blood and ferocity. Then it is that impis and raids are organised, and to whatever part of the compass the king throws his spear, is an indication to them of the direction he wishes them to take.

Pennefather has evidently obtained his news from Moffatt, at Buluwayo, but the reason he gives for their excitement seems to me a shallow and far-fetched pretext. Some of their women, they say, have been abused. Where, or by whom, he does not say. Not only is this improbable, but on the face of it next to impossible, as none of our people are in their country or even near, and it is not likely that they have

brought any of their women into our camps. Our Assistant Commissioner, however, describes their feelings as worked up to a pitch of the greatest intensity. The fact is, if any truth exists in the matter, the young regiments are getting out of hand. Their blood is up, and their cupidity aroused, by what to them appears the immense wealth in cattle, waggons, and goods of the men who have taken possession of Mashonaland, and their warlike instincts naturally prompting them, they see that now is their chance, while we are scattered broadcast over the country, with the forts barely garrisoned and badly provisioned, so they are urging Lobengula to fight, and the crafty old fox is losing control over them.

This bears out the argument that I have all along maintained, that sooner or later we must have a row with the Matabele. But it has come sooner than I expected, and yet I should not be surprised in the least if it turned out to be a false report, originated and fostered by some of the white blackguards in Matabeleland, who are inimical to our Company. Or, again, if it is true, then I am inclined to think that it is at the instigation of some of these self-same scoundrels, who, if found guilty, ought to be hanged on the nearest tree. In any case the Company ought to take very strong measures, and on the first act of hostility, a force of 1600 well armed and well equipped men, ably commanded, should be marched straight to Buluwayo, the Matabele effectually crushed once and for all, and their country occupied.

Of course, Gladstone, Labouchere, and Co. would raise a great howl over it; Exeter Hall would lift up its voice and weep over our cruelty, and the wrongs of poor suffering down-trodden savages; and all the Radicals would join in the general hullabaloo! Let them—voices soon tire and tears run dry, and the situation once accomplished would have to be effected.

Yet another point, and an awkward one, too! Supposing the Matabele and the Portuguese are hostile at the same time, what then? We shall have our work cut out for us, and our weak split-up little force will have all it can do to hold its own. Be shut up in the forts will be about the end of it. Another force should be raised at once, in view of these very possible contingencies. This would be a great expense to us, no doubt, but economy in the end, for Matabeleland would soon repay the debt incurred. Lobengula and his blood-thirsty crew must be wiped out, or driven across the Zambesi, and the very first chance he or his people give us of doing this, should be taken immediate advantage of without the slightest hesitation.

Delays are dangerous in war. Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day. This always, but especially now, should be our guiding principle.

In connection with what I have written above, I must add what, if nothing else, is in itself a curious thing to note. The natives in camp have a shave, which Gouldsbury, an exceedingly nice young fellow, who works for me in the orderly room, first brought to my notice, to the effect that an impi of 500 Matabele were seen a day or two ago, close to Lynch's signal station in the Lippekoli hills, about forty miles northwest of Tuli. I have heard nothing from Lynch on the subject, but, of course, it is quite possible for him to be in the dark. Then again, natives have no idea of numbers, and are given to exaggerate accordingly. Possibly a patrol spying out the land and its nakedness. Still, the fact of the rumour is to a certain extent significant, for frequently there is truth and accuracy of information in *Bazaar Gup*, which, as I have found in the East, curiously enough flies at times quicker even than electricity, with all its lightning speed. So that it is foolish to despise it, and, on the principle that "to be fore-warned is to be fore-armed," I have sent out two intelligent patrols, under two of my smartest N.C.O.'s, Reed and Fitzgerald, from different points, with orders to meet at the junction of the Macloutsie and Shashi Rivers, where they are to cross over, reconnoitre some twenty or thirty miles beyond, and then return here by the shortest way.

I have been very busy writing out orders, purporting to be from Pennefather to the different forts, cautioning them, in face of existing reports, to take all military precautions, and be on the alert, an order that he wrote and asked me to send, so as to save time, always an all-important factor in war, but more especially so in a crisis of this nature.

It has been raining steadily all the evening, ever since 3 p.m., and there seems to be no promise of cessation. The rains, I am very much afraid, are setting in. This is decidedly awkward at the present juncture, for it will impede movements, and cut off communication with up country, and I should like to see some boats, or rafts, come up to enable us to get stores across the rivers.

We have had a wet and cheerless Christmas. However, we were as merry as we could be, under the circumstances, toasting sweethearts, wives, and not forgetting all absent friends, while the anticipation of a brush has enlivened us up considerably, in spite of the torrents of rain that has done its

best to damp our ardour. It is very acceptable though, for the flies and fleas of late have been very thick and troublesome, and the heat rather trying, and it has certainly squelched them, for a time at all events.

I have little more to tell you, except that twenty-one salted horses, sent us by Nicholson from the Transvaal, have come in—a poor lot, in miserable condition, they are, too.

Pennefather arrived at 6 p.m. on the 29th, and an ass belonging to some prospectors was killed by lions, between three and four miles from here. So you see, what with the spectre of war impending over us like a dark shadow, rain clouds gathering over our heads, rivers rising in swollen torrents, and real live lions, we are going to have a lively time.

Well, any mild excitement is better than deadly monotony, I think, and it is no fable this time about the lion and the ass.

Capper, Brown, and Carr Ellison have returned without a bag, although they saw plenty of spoor, and game as well; and my patrols are in, without having seen a Matabele, or any traces thereof.

Coolies from Natal are dribbling up here, and I have just engaged one of them—a Madrasi calling himself Peter—as cook at £6 a month, on the understanding that this is to be raised to £8 if there is a numerical increase to our mess! These are high wages, but Peter is a good cook, and independent, so we have to put up with it, or dispense with his services. Wonderful people, these same coolies; and although they are, for the most part, the scum and refuse of India, of low caste, and, in many cases, of no caste—therefore outcasts and pariahs, of a low type generally, and wretched-looking physique—they are remarkably tough, existing on next to nothing, yet putting up with dreadful hardships. Indeed, their tenacity of life and of purpose is marvellous, and in their obstinate persistence of an object they are hard to beat. I have a kindly feeling for them, and it has been quite like old times for me, airing my Hindustani, the soft and rythmical cadence of which, when I heard it for the first time the other day, fell on my ear like sweet and familiar music. But in spite of this I had to turn one of them out of my hut to-day because he would not take several very decided "Noes" for an answer, but insisted on my buying some things I did not want. This, too, when I had already purchased an article that was of no use to me merely from good nature, and because of "Auld Lang Syne."

CHAPTER XX.

TULI.

RAINY SEASON COMMENCING.

From 1st January to 14th January, 1891.

RAIN, with its accompaniments, to which we may, I suppose, look forward as 'more or less a daily occurrence for the next few months, has swept away the Old Year, weighted by the sins and sorrows of 365 days, and has ushered in the New, with its troubles all before it, in a perfect deluge ; and, except for the noise of the great elements, we are seemingly living in the very midst of peace and silence, with not even a rumour or a side whiff from the bazaar to disturb or excite us. Is it the usual peace that precedes the storm, I wonder ?

Pennefather, who did not quite seem to relish what was before him, left here at 10 a.m. on the 5th inst., and Harrison, Colquhoun's secretary, arrived at 6.30 p.m. on the 6th, leaving for Macloutsie, *en route* for Kimberley, the same evening—but for what purpose he did not say. Curious, to say the least of it, because the most of those who have passed through so far have been on leave, except one or two on special duty.

He has ridden down on the post-horses ; and, judging from his woe-begone appearance, has had an exceptionally rough time of it. A coat in tatters ; minus a shirt, having lost the only one he had in one of the rivers ; a pair of Slade's uniform breeches torn to ribbons ; a pair of very ragged gaiters that had once been brown, but were now splashed with various coatings of mud, and slashed with stripes of other coloured dirt ; spurs clogged with mud, and black from rust ; boots nearly worn out ; and, on the top of all, a battered smasher hat that looked as if it had braved a hundred showers and a thousand breezes !

Such a sorry sight of civilised humanity I never saw in my life. He looked for all the world like a drowned rat, decked out in a fancy-dress costume of fantastical rags and tatters—

so different to the day when I first saw him at Mafeking, looking spick-and-span in a suit of London-made clothes, when he struck me as rather a dandified Bond Street dawdler or club-lounger

In direct opposition to his outward appearance, he was in excellent spirits and very cheery, rattling away about what was going on up country in an interesting and amusing vein. He has had a lot of rain on the way, but got over most of the rivers without much difficulty, except the Umzingwan, about thirty miles from here, which is very full, and flowing with a strong current. The mail for up country had got wet in crossing with one of the men, the other post rider being unable to get over. Speaking to him about affairs in Manica, he told me that we had not made a mess of them, and that nothing we had done could possibly lead to serious complications, or international arbitration ; and he laughed at the idea of it when I told him what D'Andrade had promised to do for us, and said that, not having rushed any Portuguese territory, there could be no question whatever of our having to return what was undoubtedly ours—at all events, quite as much as theirs, for they had not the shadow of a claim to Manica any more than we had.

"It is all very easy," he said, "for Downing Street to apportion off angles here, corners there, and squares somewhere else, on paper, but maps and the real position of places do not agree," which I think is very true.

Gouveia he described as an awful cut-throat and scoundrel, who for the past twenty-five years has been the sole and paramount Portuguese representative in those parts, and who ought to be strung up on account of all the atrocities he has committed ; while D'Andrade, although he was a nice gentlemanly fellow, had of recent years been very much mixed up with Gouveia, and had his price. Forbes had effected their capture smartly, and done his part of the performance very well. He corroborated what I learnt from Mundell, as to the comicality of the whole proceeding, and the ludicrous absurdity of the final situation.

I do not altogether agree with Harrison, and I think that we shall hear more about it later on, when D'Andrade, by a recital of his woes, puts a light to the fuel of their ire and excitability ; and as to his contention that there was no possibility of a row either with the Portuguese or Matabele, it remains to be seen.

The former might be disposed of easily enough, but what are we going to do with the latter? Leave them in possession of their country, call in missionaries, distribute Bibles, and convert them? Or leave them alone as a standing menace on our flank and line of communication? This will be a standing dish without relish. Or are we for once in our lives about to use a little common sense, and going to drive them across the Zambesi? There is little else that we can do.

It is curious sometimes to notice the changes that occur during a conversation, and the different effects caused thereby, as well as the turn in a totally opposite extreme it will now and then take. This happened to be the case at dinner to-night, and somehow or other, after a short lull, quite an argument arose out of a chance remark of mine to Goody on the utility of keeping a diary.

I have always, as you know, considered a diary on active service, or on any occasion that is out of the common, or of interest in any way, not only most useful, if regularly kept, as a reference, but I maintain that in the hands of a practical, intelligent, and observant man, it is, as a practical experience, invaluable to himself, and quite as valuable to others. On a business such as we are engaged it is particularly useful, and it depends entirely on the man himself to make it interesting, amusing, and instructive, while as a simple record of people one meets, and events that occur, to be able to look back on it in years to come, and revive the scenes of long ago, is in itself a sufficient inducement to me to keep a diary.

Tye was the only one who cavilled at this. He saw no use in them whatever, even in official diaries on service, and, by way of substantiation, he quoted an entry that he had made in his official diary, as showing the absurdity on Warren's part in ordering all officers to keep diaries; *i.e.* "Ward Bennett got command of 5th Lancers. God help him." To talk like this is puerile, and shows up the vacancy of his mind in a far clearer light than all the vapid bluster he usually gets rid of, while it exposes the ignorance and unfitness of the man keeping the diary, and not of the man giving the order.

In the course of conversation, Hannay remarked that some people had a clever knack of remembering conversations, and afterwards jotting them down in their diaries; but Capper differed from him, and said that he thought a man was of necessity bound to forget a great deal before he could write it down. It is very true, as Hannay replied, that a man may

not actually recollect word for word, but it is quite near enough if he does not forget the main points and pith of what he hears. As you can imagine, I listened to this with much inward amusement and satisfaction to myself, and I expect that many of my entries would make them, the sceptical Tye included, open wide their eyes and stare.

Speaking of magnetism and its different aspects, as between two human atoms, my experience with this man Tye has been somewhat peculiar. Instinctively I felt, when I first met him, that he was an antipathy, an instinct which constant contact and intercourse with him are developing into an intelligence, and this in spite of his extreme civility to me. Indeed, he seems to go out of his way to be civil, and, though I return the compliment, I keep mine within reasonable bounds and certain definable limits, avoiding him as much as I possibly can, which, in a small place like this, especially as our duties throw us together, is extremely difficult, as you can imagine.

But, sharp and wide awake as he considers himself, and as he undoubtedly is, I can see through the thin veneer of "civility," which, as the shrewd and long-sighted Bulwer Lytton says in one of those pungent and logical notes with which his works bristle, "is the prettiest invention possible for dislike."

Now there must be some reason for this, and I will not rest until I have found it out. I know quite well that he does not appreciate the meaning of my magnetic theory, nor is he aware of my antipathy to him, for I have never betrayed myself; yet I have a suspicion, lately born, which is thriving nicely, that he suspects me as being, or likely to be, a source of some annoyance or unpleasantness to himself, so keeps a strict watch on me, and is, therefore, always on his good behaviour. Now it is my nature never to suspect a man, and I always like to believe in him until I find him out; but when a man, without meaning to, leads me to imagine that I am suspicious of him, what am I to think? Why, what can I do but reflect on the cause that has given rise to this one-sided suspicion? The more I think about it, the stronger the suspicion grows that this man has accepted his present position for a positive and well-defined object, and that, for some occult reason best known to himself, he wishes to conceal it from me. Why he does so remains to be seen.

You will think I am turning into a second Stuart Cumberland. Not at all. With me it is nothing more than a magnetic

instinct in the first instance, followed by a quiet course of study, and assisted by the ordinary logic of reason; for, though I naturally detest antipathies as such, they are all the more interesting, and as fellow atoms mingling with us in the mixed stream of humanity, they add a spicy flavour to life, which gives it all the more zest.

I hear from many sources that Colquhoun and Pennefather do not hit it off, to use a very mild expression, and, indeed, the open remarks of the latter at mess, go a long way in confirming it. Colquhoun, according to him, assumes too much power, and tries to command the corps, and he, naturally, resents it. To a certain extent this is not to be wondered at, as Pennefather has been away so long. Whatever Colquhoun's faults, it is excessively bad form of the Commandant of the force to openly criticise the Administrator; but I am not surprised at this, as a man who will speak to his officers as I have heard him, and publicly censure them before their own men, is not fit to command a regiment, no matter what his other qualifications may be. The less said about Pennefather the better. Of course, Colquhoun has no business to interfere in the interior working of the police, but as Administrator he has every right to move the troops about where he considers necessary. That Pennefather is more to blame, in the wrong most probably, admits of little or no argument, I should think. Certainly a comparison between the two would be uncontestedly in favour of Colquhoun, who has brains and tact, while the most noticeable features in the other are entire absence of tact, and a furious temper.

Still, after all I first heard of Colquhoun and his brilliant career in the East, I am disappointed, and it seems very apparent that he is not a strong man. Or it may be, that accustomed, as he has been, to work in a groove, and with the practised regularity of a machine, the irregularities and want of system up here—only to be expected in an unformed country—have upset his equilibrium. Whatever the cause, however, this kind of thing is pitiable, in fact, unpardonable, for what we most need in a development such as this are strong men and stern measures.

I heard *reveille* sound at 5 o'clock this morning, an unusual thing for me, as I am generally moving about a good half-hour before it, and I was wondering why Bob had not brought me my early cup of tea, when White turned up and informed me that he had cleared.

Bob, I must tell you, is a young Mangwato who has been working in our kitchen for six months, and who so far did his work well, and seemed quite contented; so much so that I was beginning to think that he was an exception to the rule, and was going to stick to us. Like all the rest of the Mangwatos, however, he is a snare and a delusion. What makes it worse is that he was a smart, intelligent boy, could talk a smattering of English, and understood it fairly well.

My own boy, Maramon, has gone with him, having got his month's pay, and notwithstanding that another month is owing to him. Confound him, and confound Bob, is all I say.

With all their Christianity, gratitude and fidelity are unknown quantities with the virtuous Mangwato.

Shaving here, which nowhere and no time is a pleasure, but which as a choice of two evils, I would as soon forego as my bath, is simply refined torture. The climate or some other mystifying cause, influences the razors, but the flies! Oh, the adjectives that come unasked, and the passion and irritation they provoke! May the recording angel drop many a tear on my behalf, for I am in sore need of his clemency. Every morning the same serio-comic passion-play is regularly enacted.

Whether the self-same flies take part in it or not, I am at a loss to say, but they seem to rehearse the same performance day after day. Just as I am bringing my razor down my cheek, or across my chin, one pest lights playfully on my nose, another flies slap into my eye and sticks there, a third crawling into my ear remains buzzing, until I drive them away. When back they come again and again, driving me frantic, for they are too wary to be caught. While a dozen more, less venturesome brutes, circle round my head, and between it and a small cracked hand-glass, and so it goes on, until, without knowing how, I finish, but even now you have a most imperfect picture of the sore trial they are to temper and patience.

CHAPTER XXI.

TULI.

THE USUAL MORNING BURLESQUE.

From 15th to 27th January, 1891.

SINCE last I wrote, under the supervision of Pennefather as chief, I have been qualifying for a riding-master, as out of the last batch of recruits we received, quite half of them had no idea of even mounting, much less sitting on a horse. It seems iniquitous that such should be the case in a country like this, and whoever is responsible for it should be drawn and quartered. The fact of it is that Rhodes is so inundated with letters of introduction from home that he sends on the bearers to Harris to enlist them. And so, at the risk of spoiling our horses, who are not trained as in the cavalry, we have to teach men who are quite useless to us. And as I love horses and hate to see them knocked about, and as I did not come up here with that intention, the usual morning burlesque, as I call it, is altogether distasteful, while it has driven Pennefather on to the sick list with dysentery.

Newdigate, our chief surveyor and astronomer royal, who has been here for some days, has left by waggon for Salisbury, having fixed the position of Tuli and Pilapwie from some observations he took, the former being

Latitude $21^{\circ} 56' 10''$ South
Longitude $29^{\circ} 12' 0''$ East
Variation of Compass $21^{\circ} 37' 0''$ West,

and the latter

Latitude $22^{\circ} 37' 30''$ South
Longitude $27^{\circ} 18' 30''$ West
Variation of Compass $1^{\circ} 49' 14''$ East,

and I am pleased to be able to say that three boats for the rivers up country have at last arrived, but without the requisite gear, so they are almost useless, except that it is possible to improvise some as a temporary measure.

Pennefather, who is still laid up and looking very woe-begone, takes a very dolorous and down-hearted view of things, and maintains that it is useless sending up convoys at this season. I do not agree with him, nor does Tye I am glad to say, as he is now responsible for stores.

The rivers, no doubt, are full, and some of them impassable, but only at times, for, like all South African rivers, they fluctuate; so that, as long as you give convoys plenty of food, it is better to start them than not. They may be delayed for a week, or even more, at one place, but this is preferable to remaining here all the time, where they will be quite as much exposed as if on the road, and the boats will be of the greatest assistance to them in crossing the large rivers.

I have received a telegram from Harris, that has been forwarded by mail, ordering me to pick out twenty-five of the biggest and finest men, to send up country to Jameson. No reason assigned, so I presume Jameson wants them to make a show with to impress some native chief. For work and endurance give me small men in preference to giants any day, as they are far tougher and handier.

Tye has shown me a wire that he has received about these big men, who are to go with Jameson on some secret mission, and who are taking 500 rifles and 50,000 rounds of ammunition. This can have nothing to do with the Matabele scare, which has died away like a sudden puff of wind. Is it, then, to arm some of the Manica natives against the Portuguese, and if not, what else can it be for?

News has reached us that the Company are raising seventy-five more men at Kimberley, and talk of appointing two officers. There is little use in this, and to be on the safe side we require at least half a dozen more troops, while a dépôt should be formed at Kimberley, under the command of an experienced officer, who, in addition to recruiting and drilling, could assist Harris as military secretary. It has struck me all along that it was weak of Rhodes putting a man of his stamp in such a responsible position, but I am informed that it is a reward for dirty work done for Rhodes at Buluwayo.

A doctor by profession, and a stock-jobber at Kimberley, unacquainted with business, and utterly ignorant of military matters, after a year's experience, bitter to the Company and at our expense, he is beginning to grasp some idea of the work, with the help of a large staff, though he has still much of the detail to learn. But having at first expended money like

water, we are now in the throes of a terrible fit of economy. The clothing which should have been here, allowing a very broad margin, in September, has just been received and served out. Not a moment too soon, however, for most of the men are in rags, and absolutely bootless. Our signallers, who of course have constant climbing over rocky ground, have been for months in this disgraceful state, and have had to do their work in naked feet, the result of having an utterly incompetent quartermaster and an ignorant secretary.

If there is any truth in what Forbes wrote from Salisbury, on the 22nd of last month, that the Matabele question is not yet settled—and I believe there is a certain amount of it true—it clashes with the information received from Harris, which says that news from Buluwayo is very quiet.

In reality, I shall not be surprised one way or the other. Loben is for peace, for he clearly understands its undoubted advantages, and is anxious to seize the opportunity. It is evident that he can look far and away ahead of his people, and if his counsels prevail, it will be peace. If, on the other hand, the blood-thirsty instincts of his young bloods, elevated to the highest pitch of excitement and intoxication by drink, win the day, then we shall have war.

How are we to avoid it? is indeed a burning question; and is it possible to? "You must surround the savage with peace, if you want the virtues of peace"; but this will be a difficult if not impossible feat, with the Matabele proper and warlike.

What is beyond my comprehension is, that if they mean fighting, why are they postponing it? Now is their chance, if they only knew it. The rivers are all flooded as far as we know, and communication between here and Victoria, at all events, is interrupted, if not suspended. A troop is in Manica, so is a portion of C; D troop is stuck on the Lundi. Salisbury and Charter in particular are very weakly garrisoned, and the Pioneers are scattered all over the country. The Commandant is here sick, and suffering from depression, and the separate troops would have to act independently; indeed, the most they could do would be to hold their own. Tuli could not assist, and the 25 men for Jameson, who leave here in a day or two, will not reach Victoria for weeks, unless the boats catch them up; and if they were to fall into the hands of the Matabele, a very possible contingency, a nice find the rifles and ammunition would be. Their going will weaken us considerably, and it would take us all we know to hold the

place if attacked. The B.B.P. at Macloutsie are at present very weak, and could give us little or no assistance ; but it may be that want of supplies, and this very rain that is crippling us, is also restraining them !

Yet, in the face of all this, such is the fit of economy at headquarters, that not a single troop is being raised, and Tye, acting on instructions, will not spend a few pounds to purchase rope from the Pioneers to work the boats across the rivers, and with them supplies ; so, like waggons without oxen, they are useless, and lie here rotting. I call this sending equipment, without the necessary gear to work them, culpable, and Tye's shirking the responsibility of so absolutely needless an expense simply disgraceful. But according to him all the forts are provisioned up to *June*, so can stand a fairly long siege. I don't believe him, because I know what I sent up, and have a tolerably accurate idea of what has gone up since, and am certain that he is far beyond the mark. But Tye has a code of principles peculiarly his own, with which he would bluff the Devil himself !

Experientia docet. Does it ? Not all men certainly, and not to us as a nation by any means !

The convoy of rifles and ammunition, going in three wagons, under Sergeant Dillon, who is in command of Jameson's twenty-five giants, is not ready yet. Half the loads are across, and the river is lower by a good deal ; yet we are waiting till to-morrow, by which time the river may rise again. On the other hand, it may go down still more ; though, in this weather, the other contingency is much more likely, so why give it the chance ? There is no time like the present, in the rainy season, I say. Now if this transport was *our* own, or hired by contract, and under official superintendence, it would have been across, and already on its way ; but under the present conditions, transport riders do exactly as they like.

This is one of the main drawbacks to transport hired as it is, in the economy of which Tye believes in, and I do not. Now I know what I am talking about, and so does he. But whereas I flatter myself that I am an authority on the subject, from much practical experience, as well as having made a study of it, I know that he is ignorant in the essence and detail of it ; yet I have noticed more than once that he is a powerful advocate for hired transport without *our* own superintendence. More than this, his touchiness on the point has not escaped my attention ; and on one or two occasions, when I

have pressed the point of my argument home, it has made him wince distinctly.

Now far from being a delicate and sensitive little creature, Prince Bluster Furioso has a hide like the hippo, warranted proof against all explosives ; so why should he wince over my harmless little home-thrust ?

In his own way, he is clever, sharp as a needle, and as knowing as a cat ; and in this instance, in spite of his ignorance of the principles of transport, he knows what he is doing. Then why does he do it ? I want to know ; and whence this touchiness in one so thick-skinned ? Can his own suspicion of me have anything to do with it ? Putting two and two together, the obvious deduction is that it has ; but I must wait for further developments. I hate suspicion ; but when a man plants it with his own hand, what is one to do ?

To resume the question of transport. A Government, or big concern like ours, should always have their own, especially in a country like this, where ox-waggons will form the only available means of conveyance for years to come.

I should like to induce Rhodes to introduce riding and baggage camels. In spite of the rains, I am more convinced than ever that they would do well, for they are powerful swimmers, so the rivers would not be an obstacle, except, perhaps, in the first rush ; and if proof against the fell disease which is so fatal to horses, they would, I feel certain, be a great success. Brought from Egypt, or Aden, and landed at Pungwe Bay, or on the Zambesi, the initial cost would be expensive. But there is no reason, that I can see, to prevent them from breeding successfully up here. It is, at all events, quite worth the trial ; and no matter how great the expense for the first few years, they would in the end be ever so much cheaper than horses, especially those that are salted. Besides this, it is a matter of history that the Portuguese, in 1569, when General Francisco de Barreto was appointed Governor of Eastern Ethiopia, under the title of Conqueror of the Mines, made several expeditions to seize the mines, employing camels successfully for the transport of cannon, baggage, and mining machinery ; and what they could do in those days in the same country, we can surely accomplish now, with all the advantages of superior experience and appliances.

This morning, after breakfast, we rowed across in one of the boats—the first that has ever floated on the Shashi, I expect—to bring over Knight and Gurney, who have been as

far as the Umzingwan with a despatch. When they got there, they found it impassable. Whitehead, from the opposite bank, made several attempts to swim across, but failed. This was on the Sunday. On Wednesday afternoon, during a temporary fall in the river, Knight and Gurney, having secured their horses, swam across themselves, the former carrying the despatches in his hat. There they found Hudson and Inglesby, also post-riders of mine, who were waiting for the up-country mail, it being over a fortnight since we got the last. Having done their work, they swam back again ; and leaving yesterday afternoon, reached here this morning. We brought them over in the boat, holding on to their horses by the reins ; but the river is quite shallow now, as the horses walked all the way, except for about ten yards on the near bank ; but the water is about 250 yards across, and the current fairly strong.

What about the Portuguese? Are we going to have a row with them? or will the question be referred to and settled by arbitration? or yet again, will it all end in smoke, as many a question before it has? I expect it will be squared, as the French say *Tel-el-Kebir* was. Or will the wily Portuguese go for us when they find us in trouble with the Matabele? I cannot help thinking of an anecdote which a man called John Bayliss, who was a passenger with me in the *Tartar* when I came out, told me with great gusto to shew his utter contempt for them. Some years ago he was at Delagoa Bay when the disturbance about the railway was on. Some other Englishmen and himself were in a *café* having some refreshment, when a Portuguese police official came in. To use his own forcible language, "I was insulted by him, or at all events considered I was ; so I seized him by the scruff of the neck with one hand, and by the seat of his breeches with the other, wiped the counter with him, and then threw him out of the window to shew my contempt for the miserable little whipper-snapper." And when I tell you that John Bayliss was a regular John Bull to look at, and quite as strong as one, you can imagine, as I did when he told me, that he was well able to do it. Decidedly rough on the little Portuguese, no doubt, but there is a strong vein of the bully in us fair-play-loving islanders, in spite of all the cant we talk. All the more reason for foreigners who know this to avoid us, and looking at it in this light alone, it would be as well, perhaps, if our swarthy friends left us alone in Manica, for we have many more John Baylisses, who are quite as rough and as ready to wipe them out.

This is the 27th, and Sergeant Dillon with Jameson's giants have only just got away. They certainly are a very fine looking lot. I have just returned from the other bank of the river, having inspected and wished them good luck. I felt it a farce when I did so, as I know they will have a bad time of it with the rain; however, I told them to make the best of it, and from what I know of them I am sure they will!

I have had a talk with Dreyer, who is in the Commissariat Department—God save the mark!—his special line being to buy cattle, and he tells me that from all the information he can gather from Tati, he feels certain that there will be fighting in Matabeleland not later than the middle of February, and possibly earlier. But he throws rather a different light on it.

According to him, "After the big dance, which will soon take place, there will be a split in the nation. The weaker half will then demand from the stronger—the king's party—war against the hated white. Should their request be refused, the weaker side, under whose leadership he does not know, will murder Lobengula, or try to, and the result will be civil war. If foiled in this attempt, which it is more than probable they will, as the king will be too wary and wide-awake for them, their intention is to lie in wait for the convoys on the Tuli-Victoria road, and in that case it is not unlikely that Loben will appeal to the Company for help." In any case he would be sure to follow the rebel impis, and even if unable to crush them, he can prevent them from doing us any mischief.

Loben is a long-headed old fox, and will hold his own, and so save our prestige; but if drink gets hold of and carries him away, and he joins issue with the other party, they will make things nasty for us. Whatever happens, if there is a split, we shall have to step in and take the country.

My own idea, on the supposition that Dreyer's information is true, and that Loben is not killed by treachery, is that he will stick to us, for he sees on which side his bread is buttered, and eventually we shall assume a Protectorate over his country. If, however, he is killed, but his party stick to his son, a strong column will be required to put it in order!

CHAPTER XXII.

TULI.

THE TIDE OF A FIXED PURPOSE.

From 28th January to 3rd February, 1891.

IN spite of the uncertainty of the Matabele question, and of the near prospect of its practical solution by a warlike demonstration on their part, prospectors are arriving from down country, and, undeterred by rains, roads, rivers, and Matabele, they are fighting their way up to Salisbury! And all for what? Gold, or rather the hope of finding it.

Even the very names of the dogs are suggestive and indicative of what is uppermost in men's minds. One tailless cur cocks its ears and looks wise when called Concession, and another sleepy-looking mongrel wags an abnormally long tail to the name of Syndicate. The ruling passion is gold, and the one thought of those who drift up here, on the tide of a fixed purpose, is of it. Mashonaland is our Kilmansegg, and its reefs of quartz are her golden legs. And to get to it, no risk is too great, no rain too heavy, no river too deep, and no spear too sharp, and we run the gauntlet of them all with a smile on our faces, simply on the off-chance of looking for what may not be there.

Surely there must be a mystic magnetism in the yellow metal that we know not of—or is it merely the anticipation of what it can effect?—that makes us so eager to risk even life in the hope of finding it. And yet, I suppose, we should readily find another substitute if its supply ran short.

It is interesting to study the class of people who are passing through here with that object, and, if hitherto I was of opinion that humanity is mixed, I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that it is far more mixed than I ever pictured it, in the wildest or strongest effort of my imagination. Take, for instance, a few specimens who signed the mining licenses before me this morning, which give them a right to enter Mashonaland and prospect for gold. Two were Italians and one a Spaniard,

who smelt—whew!—very strong of garlic. So much so that old Woodenhead, whose sense of smell is rather deficient, shook his head, and made awful grimaces over it. The Spaniard looked an awful cut-throat, and quite effective enough in his picturesque costume to pass as a first-class stage brigand, or as the real article, with little or no persuasion. The Italians, I believe, were barrel-organ grinders, in the palpable disguise of political refugees, with a decided dash of the conspirator about them, and one of them reminded me so forcibly of the lean and hungry Cassius that I was on the point of asking him if he traced his descent from, or had any connection whatever with, that historic character, when two Scandinavians were ushered in. Any hopes I had entertained of a whiff of ozone, direct from the Vikings of the old Norse legends, were soon disappointed, and the only trace of it that I could find was in their names alone.

1 An Englishman and two Scotchmen completed the number, but there was little noticeable about them except that peculiarly hungry look, which is assumed by those who develop a greed for gold.

But, although we live by day and night in an atmosphere of gold, and though our very dreams and hopes, our fears and aspirations, are golden, we are frequently reminded of the realities of our life in a very realistic way.

Only last night I found a large scorpion underneath my pillow, and White, my batman, as he listed his blanket to get into bed, discovered a large puff adder snugly curled up on the one beneath, and, though there were three other men besides himself in the tent, they allowed the brute to escape. To complete the list, Brennan, who lives in the same tent, was bitten by a tarantula, and Chinnery's horse, which was seized in the morning with dik-kopf, died in great agony. I was with the poor thing for some time and saw it die, and its groaning was so intensely human, and so terribly pathetic—the first horse I have ever heard groan so feelingly in this horse sickness—that it nearly upset me, and I am not easily upset.

Queer ideas the men sometimes get amongst them, and who they emanate from, and how, it is hard to say. Evolved out of the erotic and erratic imagination of some fanciful hare-brain. Yesterday, because a stray Matabele—a real Abezansi this time, and not an A-maholi—brought in two oxen for sale, they had it that, as one of these was red and the other black, we are going to have war with Loben, or, rather, that he is

to have it with us. Of course, no doubt as a superstition there is some truth in it, but my idea is that the man is only a spy, and as such he would hardly risk his neck in so barefaced a manner as bearing us a parabolic message of war. Anxiety to have a look round, and to make good use of his time when doing so, is about what really brought him here, if anything did.

Another reality! Someone has seen a crocodile in the river, which means that it has been seen by nobody nowhere, but the consequence is that quite a panic has set in, and not a man will now bathe in the river. It may be the mythical one of the pool after all, who is stretching himself after his long confinement. Pennefather is still on the sick list, and very low, taking a very gloomy view of things. Tye, who was in the same regiment for years, declares he can hardly believe him to be the same man.

There is no doubt he made a fatal mistake in ever leaving Mashonaland, to go down country on leave. His duty to the Company and to himself was to remain where he was. Instead of that he differed, or, if report speaks correctly, fell out with Colquhoun on the Manica question, and stated, as his opinion, that it could not be settled that year (1890), got leave from Rhodes, and went down country.

No sooner was his back turned than the whole country has been secured by treaty, and our troops and prospectors have occupied it. Better for him if he had never expressed an opinion. This has been due to Colquhoun and Jameson between them, and Forbes has done his share of work well. That this ought to have, if it has not, something to do with Pennefather's depression, I am quite of opinion. I must say I was astonished when he returned here on the 12th, and said openly that he had no intention of crossing rivers to be food for crocodiles. I certainly gave him credit for more go and determination, and thought that he would be one of the last men to turn back, having once made a start; but there is no telling what circumstance may bring out or do for the human character, in one short hour even.

The mail from down country has brought us news from Moffatt, at Buluwayo, that all is quiet and reassuring, and from Harris that the Portuguese Government are sending out quite an army to Mozambique, amid the acclamation of the people and the display of national fireworks.

Poor little men, what do they mean to do with them?

Surely not fight! Half of them will be down fighting fever not many weeks after landing, for, from all accounts, the tract of country along the coast is pestilential. It is very amusing to read the accounts of the meetings that are being held and speeches made, and the excitement that seems to be bubbling over among a certain community in Portugal; but, like soap bubbles, I imagine they are soon burst, and vanish into thin air. Evidently they have got wind of D'Andrade and Gouveia.

According to the home papers, most of them seem to agree that our action in Manica is legal and right, and maintain that Portugal has not a shadow of a claim to it. I am glad to hear this, as we have been almost entirely in the dark about what has been going on; but I suppose if we could only see the Portuguese papers, they are taking a similar view of the question, and say that we have no legal right to the country, while they have.

Will Lord Salisbury stick to us? and what will be the result of Rhodes' visit home? To No. 1, I think yes; to No. 2, good, and a clear and tacit understanding of moral support from the Premier.

Knight, Bruce, and Inglesby returned early this morning with the up-country mails, and report having seen two crocodiles about fifty yards below the drift; so it is quite possible that the hermit of the pool is not a myth, and that he has been joined by a friend from the Limpopo, into which our river runs, and which is full of them. So there is a lively look-out for us if they take it into their heads to come our way!

Knight gives me a most dismal report of things up the road so far as he has been. Hudson had to be left behind at Umzingwan with fever. Whitehead and Davis, who are in charge of the post, were also down with fever; so Hudson and Inglesby had to ride on with the mails to the next station, Setoutsi, where they found the post-riders there laid up from the same cause, and heard, on good authority, that this was also the case at Wanetsi, the station beyond; and, to make matters worse, there was only one horse at Setoutsi, the remainder of the poor creatures having died from horse sickness. He also reports that seventeen waggons were waiting at Wanetsi to get across, and that D Troop had reached Victoria.

This will give you only a slight idea of what our men and horses have to put up with, especially the unfortunate post-riders and their mounts; and now that the fiends of fever and

horse sickness are abroad, they may expect a still more lively time of it. Poor fellows and poor things ! is all I can say. They have done their work well, and will keep on doing it until the men are crippled and the horses are all dead, as it is too late now to do anything to remedy the evil ; but I must say that, in the first instance, better arrangements ought to have been made, as it was well known that the country was much broken up by rivers, and all the leading officials of the Company were well aware of the nature of the South African climate and rivers. But their excuse, I suppose, would be that they had other and more important questions to think about. No doubt they had ; but first the men, and then the horses, ought, I maintain, to have been their first and chief consideration—not merely from a humanitarian standpoint, though that should have had considerable weight with them, but from an economical, and, therefore, practical basis, for they form big items in the expenditure ! But so it has always been, and so it will ever be as long as humanity has its price, and holds itself cheap, and, like the horse, can be easily replaced. “Only humanity and horse-flesh !” says your Napoleon ; and so empires are extended and reputations built up by great men on the crumbling dust of the rank and file. And while the name of the leader is handed down to posterity, the toilers who have sacrificed their lives in making his reputation, lie in an unknown grave, and have never even been heard of.

Such is fame. And so it is now. Rhodes' name is on every lip ; but who has ever heard of Hudson, Knight, Bruce, Ingoldsby, Whitehead, and Davis ? Men who are risking their lives every day of the week in carrying out his scheme of aggrandisement, and who, though they are exposed by day and by night to rain, rivers, crocodiles, lions, and, worst of all, to fever, merely on their rations, and without any medical comforts except quinine—and that not always—do their duty not only without a murmur or complaint, but cheerfully and willingly.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without saying a few words for our men, and I cannot say more than that it is out of such material that heroes are moulded, and when you take into consideration the fact that many of them are youngsters fresh out from home, who have never seen a wild animal except at the Zoo, and know of fever as a name only, they are deserving of all the greater praise.

To shew you that it is no child's play crossing these rivers, I went down to the drift this afternoon to see Bertram and Westbrook ride across to take the mails up country. The former, who is a colonial, managed all right, but not without some difficulty, for he was swept some way down, although he was quite nude, as I had the mails and all their gear taken over in a boat; but the latter was carried a long way down the river, and parted company with his horse, which came back to our side of the river, both of them, however, eventually getting safe over.

And information has just reached us of a transport-rider who, in crossing the Lundi, was pulled off his horse by a crocodile, which stowed him in the reeds. No one would go to the poor fellow's help, until at last a much-despised native—a Cape boy—jumped in and rescued him. One of his legs was so badly mauled that the doctor, who rode out from Victoria, had to cut it off with a meat-saw, as he had no other instrument, but the poor fellow died. So you see that there is nothing allegorical about the saurians of our streams, nor is there anything mythical about the lions who roam about, as a post-rider has been chased recently by one, and two of my horses have been clawed by them, one of them very badly, while there is enough roughness and readiness about our remedies, to appal even the stoutest-hearted.

This, as I have remarked before, is the Casual Corps, but, after several months' experience of it, I have made up my mind that it is curiously and peculiarly casual, and more like a commercial and filibustering body of volunteers than a regiment of mounted infantry or police. We ought, in fact, to be called "Rhodes' Own Freebooting and Colossal Speculators," though where our speculation is to come in, except to be speculated with by the Colossus, is more than I can say.

At the present time orders are being issued at Salisbury, by Forbes, as acting commandant, and at this end, by Pennefather as actual C.O.; while, a month or two ago, when the latter was in Natal, and Forbes and Heyman were in Manica, Slade—a very good fellow, but a militiaman without any experience, and a junior subaltern—commanded the corps, although many in it were senior to him. In extenuation of this, want of communication and force of circumstances might be urged, but my contention is that it should never have occurred in the first instance, and proper arrangements ought to have been made in the event of contingencies, which were not only possible but probable.

The fact is that one never knows who is commanding. With Harris at one end, and Pennefather at the other, I am, as commandant of the advanced base, between two stools, and since Tye's appointment a new element has appeared, and many of the orders I receive from Harris are conveyed through him—a very roundabout and unnecessary way—which may be in keeping with and for the purpose of economy, or may have underlying it a far-reaching motive; but as I have no intention of remaining in the R.O.F.C.S. any longer than I can help, and as I have been promised one of the first civil appointments, I do my work to the best of my ability and conscience, and treat trifles such as these with the same indifference of contempt that a duck's back takes water. There can be no doubt that Harris and Tye are up to something—in their own choice language playing a little game of blind man's buff. Well, let them, it amuses them, and does not hurt me, for the sliding principle runs very smooth and easy.

But to resume. Harris sends orders from Kimberley, Pennefather from wherever he happens to be, and tells you that on no account are you to take orders from the former, while verbally he openly calls him an utter fool, and tells us to ignore him. This, no doubt, as regards military matters, is quite true, and Harris has been learning his work at our expense; still, on principle, and in reality, his orders should be obeyed, even by Pennefather himself, as being the mouthpiece of Rhodes, and therefore of the Company. As regards details affecting our interior economy and discipline, I always use my discretion. His order, for instance, not to send forward the food supplies because, I presume, they had been furnished by Weil, I disregarded entirely, and well I did so now, as there would have been but a very small supply up country at this very minute; indeed, to my mind, it is too small as it is, in spite of what Tye says.

But there are certain questions that, if overlooked, would make things awkward, and, in fact, altogether interfere with the proper working of the concern. Any comment on my part, however, is unnecessary, as Pennefather's conduct speaks for itself. It will give you an idea, though, of some of the difficulties I have to contend with.

The other day I happened to shew Pennefather some regimental orders that Forbes had issued. One of these was relative to "all correspondence from all ranks of the Police to the Administrator being sent through the O.C. B.S.A.C.P."

Before the word "*Administrator*" were two letters, "H.H.," standing for "*His Honour*."

Imagine my surprise when Pennefather sat down, and there and then wrote out another order, differing from the original in no way, except in the omission of the letters H.H., exclaiming, as he concluded it, "His Honour, indeed! He's not His Honour any more than I am."

Dear me, how small is this world of ours, and what pygmies are we who live in it, with our puny minds and narrow, insignificant views. Can you wonder that I have no respect for, but intense dislike and a strong objection to serve under, a man of this stamp?

One more illustration, and I am done. An order was published yesterday by Pennefather, on receipt of a letter from Harris, that had been dictated by Rhodes, calling attention to the extravagance of subordinate officers in making purchases, and pointing out that in future any extravagance of this nature will be charged against the pay of the officer offending.

This has come rather late in the day, considering that since September, when Tye assumed the duties of Senior Commissariat Officer, we have received the most explicit instructions, which have been several times repeated, that no more purchases were to be made by anybody on any account, except by him.

But no more, for nothing I can add could intensify existing conditions!

CHAPTER XXIII.

TULI.

FRANK JOHNSON ARRIVES FROM CAPE TOWN.

From 4th February to 8th February, 1891.

IT is a wild, wet, blustering morning. The rain is coming down steadily, and has been all the night, and ever since yesterday afternoon. The river was higher yesterday morning than ever we have had it, though it kept falling steadily during the day, only to rise again this morning, and now the water is right across from bank to bank, with only a sandbank shewing here and there.

It is hardly possible, however, to enjoy the scene, as the wind, with a weird wailing, keeps sweeping through the reeds of my hut; and when I attempt to go outside, it drives the drenching rain into my face, so that it is quite useless trying to look; besides, it is so thick that I cannot see half-way across.

My hut was finished two days ago, and though not quite so large as the one I had at Macloutsie, it is fairly large and comfortable, and as I have more of the whisky-box windows in it, the light is not so dismal. It is fairly waterproof on the whole, but is rather too well ventilated to suit crotchety, rheumatic, pampered or fastidious people. It suits me very well, as I like to get all the air I can, though at night, when I am particularly anxious to read or write, I find it annoying; for when, after much manœuvring, I manage to light my candles, they splutter and fizzle away at the extravagant rate of two of the best wax-tapers in something under an hour, and the light they give is failing and flickering.

Johnson, of the Pioneers, has just arrived here, and brings us news from Cape Town that Rhodes and Sir Henry Loch have gone home to interview Lord Salisbury, and rumour, that fickle jade, has it, that a month after their arrival Charter Co.'s shares will be up to £10. I know little or nothing about it, but I am not so sanguine as all that. It is possible, even probable, that such may be the case when a rush into

Mashonaland of some several thousand prospectors takes place, but not now, unless a little bearing is about to be adopted. That, as soon as the rains are over, we shall have a rush, I quite believe, but not in the numbers that many anticipate, and I think Johnson altogether too sanguine, when he predicts that over 10,000 will come in between now and next November. In his and other cases, the wish is father to the thought, and much as I should like to see double that number in the country, I am certainly dubious. He speaks in the highest terms of it—of the soil being rich not only in gold, but also from an agricultural and pastoral point of view—and he asserts that its capabilities of production, and of maintaining a large population, are beyond dispute, and its future quite as much a certainty.

As a clear and succinct proof that he believes in it most thoroughly, he tells me that he has got all his Charter shares made out in his son's name, who is only an infant of two, so that they cannot be touched for nineteen years. This certainly looks as if he had implicit confidence in the stability of the Company and of the future, and that he is not only a mere speculator, or gold gourmand, but—there is always a but. Life is as full of them as vegetation is of thorns, and the rose is not the only flower with its spikes of compensation. I am also a believer in its destinies, but confidence such as this is as acceptable as a fine dry day with an Italian sky after months of rain, for nineteen years is a long time, and the future is a blank, and who can tell what will happen in the yet unborn time that lies before us? Besides this, the gold has yet to be found, and when found it has to be taken down country, and with transport from £80 to £90 a ton, and no immediate prospects of lessening it. These are points, therefore, that require very careful consideration!

Of course Johnson is in the position of having staked his all, and as he is representing a great many syndicates and people, as well as holding contracts of all kinds for every conceivable thing, his stake is very considerable, and he stands to make a great fortune, or lose every penny he has. Naturally he is sanguine, and I don't altogether blame him—probably should be of the same opinion exactly if I were in his place. Speaking about Cape politics, he told me that Rhodes, with all his strength and ability, is as ignorant of detail as a child, and requires a good staff to keep him straight. He has the head; Sievewright the detail at his fingers' ends; and Merriman

the brilliancy. Sievewright, he says, has made Rhodes, for he has the confidence and sympathy of the Dutch party, who dislike Rhodes, and that he has gained them over to believe and trust in him. Superficially, or speaking in a general kind of way, he is more or less near the truth, but although I have had no practical experience of South African politics, I cannot agree with him in one or two points. Rhodes is not so ignorant of detail as Johnson imagines; on the contrary, his knowledge and grasp of detail is, I think, wonderful, more especially when you consider that he rarely, if ever, puts pen to paper, so it is shewn in his speeches alone. It is this hatred of writing that has led to the erroneous belief that he despises detail.

That he requires a staff goes without saying, and that he selects a good one is, as Napoleon said, one of the proofs of a man's greatness. Perception in seeing their value, broad-mindedness and common-sense in overcoming prejudice, and the sagacity and perspicacity to pick their brains to the greatest advantage!

I have heard Wolseley abused in the same narrow-minded way, but it needs very little reflection after all to decide whether a busy man, be he statesman or soap-boiler, requires about him men of talent and business capacity, or duffers and ignoramuses?

As we are on the subject of Rhodes, one of the Transvaal papers received last mail, the *Standard and Digger's News*, I think—a scurrilous and prejudiced rag, whatever its name—abuses him all round, and stigmatises him as a swindler.

This is strong language to use, even if there were some foundation of truth in it, against anyone, but specially so against the man who is making South Africa—welding and consolidating it into a unit and a power—that is, if it is ever to be made, and I think that it will be if Mashonaland is a success. Indeed, the whole question is one of time, and, if left to it, will be subdued, for "what will not time subdue?" and if Rhodes and his lieutenants do not squander, or throw it away either precipitately or elaborately, we shall have an empire from Cape Town to the Zambesi, that will some day rival India, and be second to none in Greater Britain.

So that we can afford to let a nameless organ, whose influence does not extend a mile beyond its office doors, descend to the lowest depths of vituperation, and the stronger and viler the abuse, the better in every way for our cause.

The fact is that Rhodes has many detractors in the Transvaal, and a certain set who have been trying to levy blackmail

on him in connection with Lobengula's concessions, during his late journey through that country, but without success, never lose an opportunity to vilify him; and I have already noticed that it is quite the custom of this very free and democratic country, where Jack is as good as his master, to call a spade a spade, and men are rather apt to speak of each other in quite an ordinary way—behind their backs, of course—as liars and swindlers.

It is another wet, cloudy morning, and the river is racing along at about five to six miles an hour, sweeping with it all sorts of *débris*—broken trees, bushes, reeds, and varied rubbish. This it has been doing since yesterday, removing all the accumulations of last dry season, or, if one is to judge by the snags alone, of the past half-dozen; and so Nature, by opening her flood-gates, fills her sewers, and cleanses this world of ours far more effectually than man, with his artificial means.

The view, as now seen from the fort, is grand, the wild and whirling flood of yellow water stretching from bank to bank, over a quarter of a mile broad at its narrowest, and at one point only, sweeps along majestically, with the music of low thunder in its roar, as if rejoicing in its untried and resistless force, and covering the sandbanks with sheets of muddy foam, it rushes round the bend and is lost to sight, but not to imagination!

Johnson, with whom I have had many long talks, thinks we shall have no row with the Matabele. Lobengula he thinks quite strong enough to keep them in order, and as long as he lives they will not even attempt to rebel, and he quite pooh-poohs Dreyer's suggestion that there will be a split. Loben's power is absolute, and his people are in abject terror of him. If his royal liver is out of order, and a man only looks crooked, it is as much as his life is worth; while even the most powerful Indunas are afraid of him.

At the highest computation, he thinks there cannot be more than 2500 of the original Zulus left, but they are now all old men. The rest of the nation are descendants of these, and mongrels and mixtures of other tribes who have been conquered by them.

When Umsilakatse and his impi of Zulus broke away from Chaka, in 1827, and marched northward, they took none of their own women with them, except Umsilakatse himself, who brought away his own three or four wives; so the men had to take wives from the women of the various tribes

they subjugated. At first they settled in the northern part of the country that is now known as the Transvaal, but fearing the vengeance of Chaka, and being annoyed by the Boers, who had seceded from Cape Colony and come there too, they crossed the Limpopo about 1837, and having easily conquered the Makalaka, they settled in what is now called Matabeleland.

Lobengula, who, much against his will, was selected by the people to be king, is Umsilakatse's son by an inferior wife, and has three or four royal wives, having married two daughters of Umandine, the late King of Swaziland, and one of the sisters of Gungunzana, king of the Umzila country, but he has only daughters and no royal son or heir by them, although he has numbers of sons by his other sixty or seventy wives. According to their laws, however, these are strictly ineligible to the throne, so that on Loben's death it is more than likely that there will be several rivals in the field to dispute it, and ructions in consequence.

The little dance took place on the 10th, and the big dance on the 25th of last month, so if they had meant business then, they would have been already on the war-path. The latter orgie takes place invariably when the first crop of green mealies is gathered in. Affairs are discussed by Loben and his council of Indunas, and expeditions are planned. The country to be raided or invaded is pointed out by the king, who throws his spear in the required direction; and it is a very significant fact that both last year and this Loben refrained from throwing it.

The latest news from Buluwayo reports all quiet and reassuring, so once more rumour has been false, and the threatening storm cloud that it predicted has rolled away beyond its deceitful reach, so, lulled by a clear sky and an ambiguous sense of security, we have again lapsed into the jog-trot monotony of a humdrum existence.

Either Loben must be a marvel, or the dread Matabele a snare and a delusion, and the ancient spirit of their Zulu fathers has not been inherited by them. This is true enough, but we English are much too fond of despising and treating our enemies with contempt, and I trust that we are not going to repeat it in this case, and act on a foolish principle. The Matabele, I have no doubt, are a much vaunted race, having an exaggerated reputation, easily won by numerous conquests over timid and peaceful tribes, and they may, for the nonce, have accepted the present situation, and adopted a peaceful

attitude, from various unknown motives. All the more reason for us, I maintain, to keep our weather eyes open and watch them, for opinion is a shifty trickster, and, when least expected, a hair's breadth may make it veer.

So far, I have made no allusion to the handling of the column from Tuli to Victoria, although many who were present have given me an account of the way it was conducted; but as Johnson was in command of the Pioneers, and therefore speaks with a certain amount of authority, I give it you almost word for word as he gave it to me, and you will see that it bears out the forecast I made, long before it started, with a great deal of accuracy.

"To shew the rottenness and absurdity of the formation on the line of march, all the men were frittered away in small flanking and advanced parties, the former only 200 yards from the road, and never going away from it, evidently because Pennefather was afraid they would lose their way, and there was no touch kept between any of the parties. In reality, they were no protection to the column, and as there were no supports, no reserve, and no main body, you can imagine," he said, "what would have happened had we been attacked. It would have been nothing but a panic from one end of the line to the other, which usually was a very long one, between two and three miles in length, and a series of small detached fights.

"Willoughby, as usual, when he arrived on the scene and overtook us at Victoria, began interfering in everything, teaching, or rather trying to teach, men who had known how to form laager when he was in the nursery, but the nuisance was soon stopped when I complained to Pennefather.

"Nearly every one in the police—I allude, of course, to the officers—were at loggerheads, Pennefather varying the performance by pitching into all of them, especially Slade and Heyman. In fact, cliques and squabbles were quite the order of the day and the feature of the march, and at Victoria, where we halted for some days, and Pennefather went out shooting, he had to take Willoughby with him, because Forbes and Heyman refused to serve under him."

But let us drop the curtain on an *exposé* so puerile and pitiable, and recollect that I take everything I hear with the proverbial grain of salt, so you must follow my example; still, never was smoke yet that did not have a fire, not even the oft-repeated scare of the Matabele wolf, which, damped for the time being, is smouldering silently, to burst out some day into

a mighty blaze, all the mightier and fiercer because of the pent-up fury of human tigers, who have been forced to inaction against their wills.

News has reached us that the Macloutsie is full and impassable, and in support of it we have had no runners in for four days.

It has been a lovely day, just cloudy enough to relieve the monotony of a clear sky. Clouds large and small, flaky and fleecy, patches of blue sky, all the bluer by contrast with the milky whiteness and pearly greyness of the clouds, a bright sun and a cool breeze, have made me feel quite another being, after the late incessant rain and dull atmosphere. After lunch I walked down to the garden. The beans, pumpkins, and tomatoes looked healthy, and the potatoes are coming up, so we have something to look forward to, the more so as for nine months past we have had no fresh vegetables, except a kind of wild sorrel, that grows in profusion along the river bank here, which, when cooked, is not unlike spinach, but not quite so good, however, and rather stringy. Yet, though it is most acceptable, we have got rather tired of it recently.

From the garden I walked on to the watering-place, where I stood and watched the Shashi eddying, swirling, gurgling, bending and levelling the reeds, the tops of which are just visible, as it rushed past me, raging and racing to fulfil its mission, and mingle its waters with those of the Limpopo, to be lost in an ocean of bitterness; and for once in my life I found myself not exactly reviling, but finding fault with Nature, for the contrariness of her laws and regulations in South Africa.

Take the long dry season, for instance, when the earth is parched, the rivers are dry, the grass burnt up, and all foliage scorched, water is scarce, and not a drop of rain falls; while in the wet weather the amount of water that is wasted in the rivers alone, to say nothing of elsewhere, either carried off to the sea, or in most cases to the bowels of the earth, is appalling. Of course, Nature follows her own very wise and rational laws, and has a good reason in so doing, and this apparent waste is evidently necessary after all, for a future supply of rain and dew, yet to my argumentative mind, it seems odd that there is not a more equal distribution, and that it does not rain when most needed, or rain less when not so much needed, and I cannot help thinking that Nature has been inconsiderate, to say the least of it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TULI.

SERGEANT SEALE'S FUNERAL.

From 9th February to 23rd February, 1891.

I HAVE just returned from the funeral of one of our poor fellows, Sergeant Seale, of the Commissariat, who died yesterday, after lingering some weeks, from paralysis. We have no parson here, so I read the service in a hard drizzle, and it seemed to me as if the surrounding elements, out of sheer sympathy for one more departed soul, comported themselves as befitted so solemn an occasion, the rain shedding tears of sorrow, the wind, that had been blustering rudely all the morning, lulling suddenly into a mournful wail—a grander dirge than any dead march ever written—while the clouds that had been scudding along before it formed themselves into a black and lowering pall, that stretched immense across the vault above, like a great blot on the beautiful blue of heaven! And for once in my life I have been reflecting, not only on the beauty and solemnity of the words of the burial service, but on the sternness of the reality that inspires them, and yet I have come away with an intense feeling of depression upon me—I, who scarcely know what the feeling is.

But is this that we call "*Death*," that comes to us in the midst of Life, total and final extinction? Is this seemingly never-ending coma, that creeps over our senses like an insidious venom, and steals upon us unawares as a thief in the night, silencing the vital flame of our inner thoughts into utter unconsciousness and oblivion, and paralysing our physical energies, until the whole is transformed into a mass of inert matter, merely a longer and a deeper sleep, a translation from one stage of an eternal existence to another? Or is it as Christianity tells us, a probation for another endless life of bliss or woe, according to our behaviour here? Or is it but a temporary fading away, as of a tiny leaf or flower, to blossom once more into a thing of beauty and infinite joy for ever, and

to keep on fading away and springing into life, in an existence that is eternal, but divided into phases or stages innumerable and infinitesimal? Or yet, again, is it a perpetual trance, and is sleep but a simulation of, or an education up to the stern reality, death—the final sleep and end of all?

And when I threw a handful of earth upon the coffin of the poor atom of humanity, simply one brick of a mighty edifice, whose life had been given to build up a colossal temple of fame to another atom like himself—greater, no doubt, in the estimation of the puny world, but a very pigmy, after all, in the presence of universal Nature, and in the clutches of the mystic and invisible, but none the less tangible and irresistible power, that levels humanity as a scythe does the golden corn—there was a force conveyed to me in the words I read, “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life,” that was never conveyed before to me.

The decay of a life, once strong in the vitality of health, teeming with its manifold passions, and buoyant with its varied hopes, fears, and aspirations, already crumbling into the ashes of the past, and about to mingle them with the dust of all ages. What beautiful and impressive words! But what an awful reflection, “dust to dust”; and only the mere hope of eternity on one side, confronted by the very substantial shadow of finality on the other; and I could not help asking myself, What in this existence is sure and certain, except our entry into, and exit out of it? and even that, how insecure! Certainly not hope, which is but a vague and shadowy abstract of an uncertainty, after all.

And so it goes on. While one life is being ushered in, another is being hurried out feet foremost, and over all a silent mystery. Yet how little does the latter affect us! A certain amount of depression, a few hours of serious and earnest reflection. The next day, a thought of a duty done, and of a face that is missed; within a week, an event of the past; and after that, a mere matter of memory, and an effort. And so it is that custom makes us callous, and we look on death as a familiar guest, that we take into our daily routine as if it was one of the ordinary events of life, instead of the event that should leave a lasting impression.

As I write in the shadows of departing evening, the scene outside is black, wild, and stormy. The rain has ceased, the wind is once more blustering, howling a fantastic, but

triumphant paean of victory over humanity, and the clouds are scurrying along madly, and in keeping with them, my thoughts surging wildly.

A knock, and Paterson, who is in charge of the sick horses, comes in to tell me that my own and favourite pony has dik kopf; and in the existence of a present reality, the still fresh reality of this afternoon is forgotten.

From a dead man to a dying horse; for such is life all the world over!

16th.—I always make a great pet of a horse—nay, more, a companion, as you know; so you can imagine the anxiety that I have suffered over Punch. But I am glad to say that he is much better, and has got over the worst of it, although, of course, he still looks very wretched, for it has been a narrow shave for his life.

Pennefather left for up country on the 14th; and Johnson, who went up to the Nuanetsi some days ago to meet Heany, having failed to see him, returned yesterday, and drove down to Macloutsie to-day, *en route* to Cape Town, in a special Cape cart lent him by Tye, so once more we are thrown on our own resources.

The more I have seen of Johnson, the less harmless and inoffensive I have found his bounce, and though his most intimate friend could not by any means call him a brilliant conversationalist, he has a decided gift of the gab, and as his career up in these parts has been tolerably adventurous, he having once been arraigned on seven charges, before Lobengula and his chief Indunas in council, I have found him very entertaining and amusing.

The recruits that have been joining us lately easily come under the category of "all sorts and conditions of men," and there are any number of what the world calls gentlemen amongst them—gentlemen of every variety of fortune and misfortune.

Just opposite my hut is the guard-tent, and three of the last joined are on duty. The sentry is a man called Powell, who was an officer in the 11th Hussars, and said to have run through £180,000 within six months. Riley, whom he has just relieved, a smart, dapper-looking fellow, was an officer in the Bays, and the third is a very nice, handsome young fellow, called Rixon, who was a broker on the London Stock Exchange, while Fletcher, the corporal of the guard, who is come in from Semelale, was a traveller for a large firm.

More prospectors arriving. This time Jews, two yesterday and four to-day! Awful-looking scoundrels, who are either Polish or Russian, judging from their crackjaw names. That filthy lucre is not only the incentive and guiding principle of their existence, but existence itself to them, is very evident, and two of them, thinking, no doubt, that as police, we are a sleepy lot of greenhorns, have been found evading the law, and, in consequence, have had to pay a fine of £5 5s., which they could have avoided by paying a shilling for a trading license. Of course, specimens such as these are not a fair criterion of the Jews as a whole, and those who hail from Poland and Russia seem to combine in themselves all the worst vices of the race, with few of its redeeming features.

But there are Jews and Jews, much as there are Christians and Christians, though, perhaps, in not quite the same ratio, and I have always failed to understand why they should be looked down upon all round, and treated with such undisguised contempt and contumely.

That this is the result, partly of an old-time and narrow prejudice, intensified by religious fanaticism, and partly an outcome of iron circumstance, that has scattered them, as a nation, far and wide over the whole world, without crushing their individuality as a race, and that it is not simply due to any singular racial characteristics, is, I think, admissible. When also we take into consideration, that for the past 1800 years or so, they have practically ceased to exist as a nation, and that in whatever country they have found a refuge, their treatment in some, notably Russia and Poland, even to this day, has been inhuman, if not barbarous, every man's hand being against them, it is not surprising that a race possessing such marked characteristics should resent such treatment, in strict accord with the principles of the old Mosaic law, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

Nor is it surprising, that owing to isolation and numerical inferiority, consequently unable even to offer a passive resistance, their resentment has found an outlet in undying hatred, and a relentless system of revenge, which is pursued in silence, but taken advantage of on every available opportunity. And there is no one on the face of this earth who can seize an opportunity to advantage, and stick to it through grim death and beyond, like a Jew, for their tenacity of purpose is as the breath of life to them, and ceases only with it.

I, for one, have always admired the chosen people. First

of all, because of their early history, when, after a long and grievous enthralment by the Pharaohs, under the leadership of the great law-giver they burst asunder the bonds of an iron tyranny, and warring against enemies and elements for 40 years, formed a country and a kingdom of their own. Shewing that in those early days they were a masterful nation in every sense, cultivating the arts of peace, yet strong in war—a nation of trained warriors, in fact, quick to pursue, and strong to avenge. Also strong in the faith of Jehovah, their one and only God, and no one else's.

That it was their faith, selfish and individualistic to the very core, that gave them the peculiarly distinctive idiosyncrasies which distinguish the Jew, and singles him out from among all the races on earth, there can be little or no doubt. For the Jew, no one will deny, has an individuality of his own, physical and mental, that stamps his nationality with the hallmark of an identity which cannot be mistaken.

It is sad to draw a comparison between their past greatness and present condition of weakness, and yet there are not wanting many palpable and visible indications of a growth of power that is flourishing slowly, yet surely and steadily, in our midst, that is a proof, if nothing else is, of their marvellous powers of recuperation, patience, and tenacity, which, despite the severest conditions—conditions that would have crushed and swamped any other race ever born—have left them, scattered and disunited as they are, an element that some day, in the not very distant future, will have to be taken into serious consideration, and consulted.

And a race which so recently has produced such men as Disraeli, Montefiore, and Hirsch, men whom any nation would be proud to call its own, must be a race possessing, at least, strength of character and nobility of tradition.

But to discuss at full length a subject such as this, which to me is of the deepest interest, it would be necessary to fill two or three volumes, so I will adjourn it, and descend to surrounding realities. And to do this I cannot do better than quote in full a letter I have just received from Whitehead, who is in charge of the post-station at Umzingwan, dated 14th February, 1891 :

“ SIR,—Troopers Hudson, Westbrook, and Bertram return to Tuli this day.

“ Troopers Hodgson and Rowley having returned from Setoutsi, as they are short of rations at that station, and have their full complement of men,

viz, four. There does not seem to be any chance of a down mail for some time. In the first place because the Lundi is full and impassable, and in the second as there are no horses whatever up the line, all of them having died.

"This river has overflowed its banks by a hundred yards on either side, and is only just passable now, so I thought it would be a good chance to send these men down, as there is no down mail, and I can't afford to ration three extra men.

"I am sorry to say that two more horses have died, as I have had only one bag of mealies since I have been on the station" (this in spite of a selected commissariat officer with a special staff—the words in parenthesis are mine); "and the horses that are left, and those that have brought up the mail, have run down considerably. The horses are grazing all day, and do not come in till sundown, but stand from that time until eight o'clock the next morning without any food. I have nothing to cut grass with here, or I would cut some to give them at night and in the early morning.

"Trooper Hudson is quite well now, I think, though a little weak, but entirely free from fever.

"I am sending in two pack saddles by Corporal Moriarty. All the others are up country, at Nuanetsi and Lundi.

"(Signed) A. R. WHITEHEAD, *L.-Corpl.*"

Pennefather has at last, after some four months of dilatoriness, begun to bestir himself, and I have just received an order from him, brought by Corporal Moriarty, that the mails are no longer to be carried by men and horses, but by a Scotch cart and oxen. As far as men and horses are concerned, I am very pleased, because, under present conditions, it is simply cruel to carry on, exposed as the former are, on short commons, to rain and fever, and the latter to weather, horse sickness, and starvation, and yet, on the plea of urgency and sheer necessity, I am very much afraid that the authorities at Kimberley will not hear of their being done away with. For, in counting the cost, what does the loss of a few more hundredweight of human and horse-flesh matter, they will argue, against the risk of losing thousands of pounds because of a day or two's delay, resulting in certain inaction when prompt action was necessary?

The bees are evidently on the move, either driven out of house and home by the heavy rain, or else in search of pastures new and wild flowers galore, for the other day a large swarm flew just over Tye's head and mine as we were talking, and to-day two equally big swarms passed over the fort.

Gascoigne, formerly a captain in the Blues, has just passed through here, having succeeded in getting his waggon and Scotch cart across the river, which has fallen considerably during the last few days; Homan also managing to send

over three waggon-loads of goods for Salisbury, under a man called Watts.

With Gascoigne, who is an exceedingly nice fellow, as hard as nails, and a typical pioneer, is a man called Macfarlane, a typical Caledonian, who knows the value of saxpence as well as most. I have had them to mess, and to shew you either how small the world is, or how roving is the Englishman, the last occasion on which Gascoigne and myself met was in the desert march in 1884-5, when he was on poor old Burnaby's staff. We have never seen each other since, yet wonderful to tell, now, nearly six years after, thousands of miles south of where we last met, we meet again in the making of a new field for English enterprise.

Another of my poor fellows dead and buried. This time from dysentery, that awful scourge of camp life and new countries. It is only a fortnight ago since he arrived here in an evident state of depression, and with a presentiment of death, for he told some of his friends that he was going to die here, and nothing would persuade him to the contrary.

One more stepping-stone to Rhodes' pinnacle. A mere unit, however, for, before it is complete, hundreds, if not thousands, more will have been added, I am afraid.

Poor O'Hagan's presentiment has set me thinking. What can this thing, to which we have given the name of presentiment, be? Surely more than a mere apprehension of something unpleasant that is about to happen to us? And even more than a premonition, or previous warning, of an event fateful to self or kin, that is going to occur, which, as the poet tells us, in coming, casts its shadow before.

Due to the morbid anatomy of melancholy, or to the hypochondriacal imagination of a mind depressed or diseased, or to some equally plausible explanation put forward by Science, and yet can you tell me why, when lying sore, sick, or wounded, the feeling in us is strong one way or the other, for life or death? And while I have met many a man strong in the latter conviction, I have come across quite as many who were equally hopeful of life.

Speaking for myself, when I was wounded by a Remington bullet, at Abu Kru, in 1885, I fell on my face almost at the foot of Briggs, one of our doctors, who promptly came to my assistance. But no sooner had he ripped open my coat and shirt, and made an examination of the wound, judging from its position, I suppose, than he exclaimed, "Poor old chap!" in

such a tone of commiseration, that it was evident he considered me a very bad or hopeless case. But in no wise frightened or made nervous by his exclamation, I almost immediately answered, "Oh! I'm all right," because I felt instinctively that my life was in no danger. Yet, as you know, the wound was most serious, and I was in hospital with an open wound for five months, and the bullet was never extracted, but now lies encysted somewhere between the regions of the heart and lungs!

That this feeling was merely inspired by hope, the offspring of a decidedly strong temperament and of a fine, healthy constitution, I will not admit, though I allow the weight and logic of the argument, for the whole affair took place in a few seconds, and I had not even time to think.

For there came to me, like a lightning-flash, an unerring instinct, an intuition, that opened my mental eyes to the welcome fact that my life was in no danger, and which brought me to my inner senses in a twinkling, assuring and convincing me that the life I had for some time held so cheap was, after all, worth holding on to.

An unerring instinct, surely; but from whence? Ay, there's the rub! For none can tell.

A magnetic message, maybe, transmitted from the Affinity of Affinities, the source and fountain-head of all inspiration, of the kingdom of life eternal in the domain of boundless and endless infinity—a kingdom in itself, apart and distinct from the vast fabric and organism of mere matter, which, but for the vital essence of Life—the mystery of all mysteries—that inspires it, would be nothing but a dry decay of dust and ashes.

A goodly number of Matabele are here working for us, and hundreds of them are leaving their country and passing through on their way south in search of work, which, as they shrewdly remark, the white man pays them for, but their king does not. This seems to me a far more certain indication of peaceful intention than any we have so far had, and makes one hopeful of the good effect that civilised surroundings will exercise on these untamed and ferocious savages.

CHAPTER XXV.

TULI.

A RED LETTER DAY. THE TRANSVAAL COACH.

From 24th February to 7th March, 1891.

QUITE an event, in its way, in our history has occurred to-day, and I have written it down in my diary in letters of red ink, and that is the arrival of the first coach, with ten passengers, from the Transvaal, which gives us another line of communication, and brings us nearer to civilisation.

This afternoon I had an interview with Mr. C. H. Zeederberg, one of the firm of coach contractors for the new line from Pietersberg, and the man who has brought the first coach here, or, rather, to the lower drift, as the river is too full to cross.

He asked me to assist him, if I could, in making a road across the veldt, so as to avoid crossing the Tuli, and in order to connect the Transvaal-Crocodile road with the Macloutsie road, and I have promised to do all I can. The veldt lying between the angle formed by these two roads is very hilly, broken, and rocky; so the new road will have to run a long way round—six miles, Zeederberg says; more like eight, I should think. And he informed me that a man called Morshead will contract to lay it out for £100; but this strikes me as being very heavy, and from £50 to £60 should be ample.

Zeederberg's firm has placed a pont on the Crocodile or Limpopo, and the Transvaal Government have appointed a Customs officer, who is no other than ex-Trooper Hendrik, one of the few doubtful gentlemen that we got rid of prior to the advance of the column. He and two other men, in partnership, are going to build an hotel there, and, on the strength of this, the place is to be christened Hendrikzdal.

The Transvaal Government have also consented to allow letters to pass through, provided their stamps are used, and Zeederberg informs me that when the line is properly established a coach will run from here to Pretoria in four days, to Kimberley in seven days easily, and that it is their intention to continue the line on to Victoria when the rivers fall.

Johnson, when he was here, was very confident that the rush into Mashonaland would be almost entirely through Beira on the east coast, up the Pungwe, and *via* Umtali to Salisbury, and that very few people, he thought, would come through Tuli; but I did not agree with him. For everyone is in the dark concerning the other route, while something, at all events, if not much, is known of this; and numbers from the Transvaal, Cape Colony, Orange Free State, and Natal, who would think nothing of trekking this way, will not even dream of coming the other; and I am already beginning to think that if we are to have a rush at all it will be through Tuli.

At 9.15 this evening, as I was thinking of turning in, Capper called me outside to see a rainbow; and as I had never either seen or heard of one at night, I concluded he was in a frivolous mood, and was reluctant to go. But on his assuring me that he was serious, I went out, and there, sure enough, in the western sky, was a perfect rainbow, distinctly marked and beautifully arched, though the colouring was faint and scarcely discernible against a massive background of grey clouds, while the moon, shining brightly, threw a silvery film over the whole scene that seemed to me like some dim reflection of a bygone age.

To descend from sky to earth, I have on my table this very minute a bouquet of wild flowers, sweetly pretty and prettily sweet; and, do what I will, when reading, writing, or thinking, I cannot keep my eyes off them. Whether I have the eye of an artist or not, I have a love of the beautiful; and beauty in man, woman, child, animal, bird, flower—even the venomous snake I loathe, or anything, in fact—has a charm and a sincere pleasure for me, though I invariably make a point of killing the snake.

These flowers have been gathered not more than a hundred yards from my hut, in the uncongenial soil of rock and stone; yet it requires something more subtle than my poor words to paint for you the peculiar fascination of their bewitching loveliness: things of living beauty to-day, fading beauty to-morrow, withered and thrown away the day after, to bloom again in renewed loveliness in the following spring.

Fertilised, if not fecundated, by the inspiring and revivifying rain, the whole veldt is covered with them; and when I walk or ride out, although the pleasure they give me is sweet, mingling with it is a bitterness of my utter ignorance of them and their ways, that irritates me beyond measure. Though

there is nothing grand or gorgeous about them—many of them, indeed, so tiny and insignificant that your dame of fashion would not even deign to look at them—they have for me a charm so unique and so singularly their own in the delicacy and variety of colour, in every shade and tint, as well as in the light they shed, and the aroma of Nature, ever fresh, free, and fanciful, they exhale, which rejoices and invigorates heart and eye.

Having in my leisure moments indulged in a few pleasing thoughts concerning natural beauties, that enable me to relax and unbend in temporary forgetfulness of surrounding realities, I am obliged to take up my pen—sorely against my will, I can tell you—and inform you of the death of four more horses through the deadly scourge that, like the dread cholera, carries off our horses with a suddenness and rapidity truly startling, while it sickens me even to think of our utter helplessness in the matter; for to see the agonies they suffer, without being able to do much more than alleviate or deaden them, is painful in the extreme. One so-called salted horse, bought for us in the Transvaal by Nicholson, and poor old No. 2, one of the best ponies we had, whom I have ridden for several months, and made a friend of, are among the number. He, too, was supposed to have been salted, and it is only six weeks ago since he recovered from a bad attack of “dik kopf”—swelling of the head—the worst form of horse sickness, to die of the less deadly, the discharge from the nostril of a slimy yellowish mucus. Terribly hard lines, I think, and reminds me of a poor fellow I knew in Afghanistan who got over a bad attack of cholera, only to die of typhoid fever on his return to India! The worst feature of it all in horse sickness is that, in many cases, the external symptoms do not appear until a few hours before death; and I have seen a horse that was apparently in robust health drop or go down as if shot (so deadly is the grip of this cursed malady), and die in two or three hours, and, in one instance, in an hour and a half.

March 2nd.—Another salted horse—one of Nicholson's lot—dead. One of the grazing guard brought me word that a horse was very bad, so Hicks-Beach and myself rode out, accompanied by Zeederberg and Morison, both men of great experience; but though they did all they could, it was no use, for the poor thing succumbed rapidly.

Great commotion in camp this afternoon, a mild cyclone of excitement in fact, and all over a supposed crocodile. An alarm was raised by someone that there was a crocodile at

the drift. Corporal Reed and several others ran down to the river bank, and kept up a perfect fusillade at the saurian, which turned out to be nothing more or less than an old snag, that, kept down by its branches, and its end turning up, and shewing every now and then, gave the excited sportsman the idea that it was a crocodile out for a Sunday spree, or on the trail of a toothsome nigger !

To still further mystify matters, the croc(k) ran into a soft sandbank, and stuck there ; so Reed, ever daring and venturesome, stripped off, and tried to swim across, to establish its identity beyond a doubt, and prove to the surrounding scoffers that it was a dead crocodile shot by him, and not a mere log. But he failed in the attempt, the current being too strong for him, and had to return unable to convince the sceptics.

A wordy war has in consequence been proclaimed between the shootists—who are all out of the pay office, plus Reed—and the onlookers, and, of course, the former will not budge an inch. Argument, hot and fiery, has been raging even in our mess, both sides having its advocates—though not one of them was on the spot, which makes it all the more amusing—Nesbitt, of course, espousing the cause of his men. All I can say is, just imagine a wily crocodile putting up its head over a score of times, and actually inviting a shower of about sixty odd bullets at its precious cranium ! *I can quite believe it*, cannot you ? and am of opinion that it ought to have been rescued ten times over from its watery grave, to be placed on a pedestal in the British Museum.

Zeederberg, who is still here, is a fine upstanding specimen of a Natal Dutchman ; active, energetic, and intelligent, full of push and go, and a man who can evidently see ahead.

Such a man is always interesting to talk to, and I elicit from him that the Transvaal Boers are of opinion that both Lobengula and the Matabele will fight. It is evident that the wish is father to the thought, for all along we have heard reports, some of which had no doubt a foundation, that Boer emissaries had gone to Buluwayo to stir up the king and people to hostilities. There is much sound truth in the old proverb, and we know that long ere this, the Boers have cast covetous eyes on Matabele and Mashonalands, only they had evidently no ready excuse to enable them to take possession ; and our peaceful and easy occupation of the latter must have made them a trifle jealous, so I should not be in the least surprised if we have some of them knocking round here before long.

If you ask me, and between ourselves, there is much more political significance in this move of ours than even the shrewdest imagines, and the gold dust excuse is a solid and practical pretext to cover the real motive; a broad expansive scheme, of which this is but a single detail.

We have had a punt made on the premises by Edwards, the carpenter—inside measurement 9" x 5", outside 12", depth 3"—and Capper, Goody, and Glasson, who is a good Thames boatman, went across in it this afternoon (4th). The river is a good 4 or 5 feet higher than we have yet had it, and has been rising at the rate of 5" or 6" in half an hour, so you can imagine the enormous rush of water, and the speed it is running at, quite six miles an hour at the very least, and as one of the men remarked, a mill stream would not have been in it.

Starting three-fourths of a mile above the drift, they landed a quarter of a mile below it, taking twenty-five minutes to get over. Goody rode on to the Umzingwan, a report having reached us that Gascoigne had broken his leg, while Capper and Glasson came back.

It turns out, however, that Gascoigne is all right, but that one of his Cape boys has damaged a limb, so Goody did all he could for him, and has ridden on to inspect the post stations. And it is high time that something should be done in the matter, as fever is on the increase, and some arrangements should be made to cope with it on the road, as the ordinary ration of "bouilli" beef and biscuits is hardly the food for a man down with fever, who requires beef-tea, sago, and such slops, besides wine or spirits to nourish him. A lot of men are in hospital here with it, where, of course, we can do plenty for them, and, oddly enough, among the number are the whole of my aristocratic guard.

I have just finished writing you six long sheets, *via* Pilapwie and, as an experiment, I am sending this by Pietersberg, which is a small town in the Transvaal, 180 miles from here, and connected with Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Kimberley by coach.

The road that Zeederberg asked me to complete has been cut, and turns out to be a good eight miles, as I thought. He promises to deliver letters in Kimberley in a week, whereas by the other route it takes from ten to twelve days, a great saving this for local letters, though I hardly think it will save an English mail. There is only one serious obstacle in the way of rivers on the new route, the Crocodile, which the enterprising contractor has overcome by a pont that carries coach and horses over bodily. On the other road there are several

rivers which, when full, cannot be crossed, as the B.T.A. have made no arrangements of any kind, sort, or description, trusting to chance, pure and simple, to get them over, through, or across somehow. Indeed, such a haphazard, happy-go-lucky country as this I have never been in—a country of chances and casualties at every turn, and it is only by using a mental suspension bridge of great elasticity and strength that it is possible to step over or avoid them.

The B.T.A. being unequal to such a herculean task as this, our mails are always late in consequence. Indeed, I have never once known them to be up to time, and some weeks (the last, for instance) it does not turn up until the following.

This does not speak well for the new contract, or, to put it in another way, it speaks volumes simply ! Why the authorities should allow this wretched B.T.A. to again take up the contract, when they did so badly last year, or why the Chartered Company—who, in reality, are the most interested and the most affected by the arrangement—did not themselves take the matter in hand, I am at a loss to understand.

The B.T.A. complain, or rather, in defence of their rotten mismanagement, plead, as an excuse, a yearly loss of many thousands of pounds. Granted.

It was not the first, nor even the second year they had run the mails. They accepted the contract with their eyes open—at least, I assume so. If they were losing steadily and regularly, why did they take it on again? It was not requested of them as a favour, and on no possible or plausible grounds were they obliged to. Having, however, done so—*i.e.* bound themselves by contract to provide the mails, at certain places on certain dates, on the penalty of a fine—they are morally and legally responsible to the public, in either fulfilling the terms of agreement, or forfeiting the amount to be levied in case of failure.

These fines have been hardly if ever imposed, and yet there are people who sympathise with the B.T.A., and say it would be very hard lines to make them pay up ! Why? I should like to know. I know they have had many difficulties to contend against ; but on the other hand, I know that they have run on the cheap lines of false economy, without making any effort to improve existing conditions by removing remediable stumbling-blocks, or in any way taking the slightest trouble to make it pay ; therefore I maintain they ought to be fined to the uttermost farthing, and I have no sympathy with or pity for them. Its Directors and Managers would do well to work

on that old but excellent biblical precept—"Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might"; then perhaps a little principle and life would be infused into the dry bones of the B.T.A. staff.

Looking at the Bible in a purely practical light, its principles and proverbs are nothing if not thoroughly and consistently—therefore pre-eminently—practical, and for this reason alone it is a great pity that it is not more widely read.

But the more I see of things up here, the more I feel that there are wheels within wheels, more mazy in its intricacies than the famous labyrinth of old, and to find your way inside would, I am sure, require the united assistance of all the London, Paris, and New York detective agencies!

A letter from Bruce has just turned up. It is dated the 5th of February, from Masi Kessi, and as it gives some information regarding Portuguese movements, it may be of interest, and is generally worth quoting :

"I have had no rest since I left my comfortable quarters at Macloutsie, and, in fact, have had no place I could call my own for three days together. I have been here and there—orders and counter-orders every week. At present I am making a road to the coast. The latest is that the Portuguese have a force on my front and on my left flank, but rivers divide us. This is certainly a most wonderful country, and you, as a lover of Nature, would be charmed with it. The growth is simply wonderful, and water everywhere; far too much of it, if such could be the case.

"I shall be always glad to hear of the troop; I have seen them all now, and you have by far the best troop in the regiment. If I had my choice of a troop to-morrow, without hesitation I should pick dear old E troop. I have been rather seedy lately, so have a lot of work to get off my hands; I will be unable therefore to write much now.

"Keith-Falconer, who was down here for a short time, is a perfect wreck; I fear he will have to be invalidated. Chaplin is a skeleton; but though the rain has been terrible and constant, we have only had two deaths from fever.

"The Portuguese have landed, so rumour says, a regiment of regulars and a battery of artillery, besides eight machine guns, at Beira, so they may give us trouble yet.

"Although I used to be rather cranky and ill-tempered at times, I should still like to hear from you now and then.

"I often look back to the days at Macloutsie, and, in thinking of you, hope that you are more comfortable at Tuli, or, rather, I mean, more free from the petty troubles that used to crop up with the B.B.P. Remember me to Nesbitt. The officers of C troop speak very highly of his son, who is in that troop.

"How is Harford? I must not forget him. So Fletcher, I saw by the last orders, the only ones I have seen since I left, is reduced. Drink, I suppose? How is Chinery—in fact, the whole lot? In writing of the old troop, I wish I was back again. I was very fond of the crowd, and I think I understand you better than I did when you first joined. I must stop, but will write more often in the future, I hope. Kindest regards to Nesbitt, Capper, Harford, and the troop at large."

CHAPTER XXVI.

TULI.

PUNCH'S DEATH. THE MAGNETISM OF SYMPATHY.

From 8th March to 31st March, 1891.

I AM nearly heart-broken ; for Punch, who has been my constant friend and companion from the very beginning, and who has been ailing for some weeks, ever since he had "dik kopf," is dead. Although his place has already been taken, I like old friends best, as it is hard to replace them, and it is seldom or ever that a new acquaintance eclipses an old friend.

The first intimation I received was from Paterson, who has behaved splendidly all through, and who came to me at nine yesterday morning, and told me that Punch had horse sickness. I went down to the sick lines, and remained there all the day up to 10 p.m., leaving him only at short intervals for my meals. All this time he had been very bad, breathing heavily and with great difficulty, while his flanks were heaving so fearfully, that at times I felt certain that he would burst every blood-vessel in his body.

Like the gentleman he was, however, he would not give in, but stood up to it the whole time without wincing, never even attempting to lie down, although we gave him every inducement in the way of blankets and straw. Sutherland, who assists in the stables, said to me, "He has got the pluck of ten ponies, and deserves to live"; and Paterson added, "He won't lie down till he can't help it, and when he does, it will be all up with him." And that is just what did happen !

You see animals have their own special characteristics and individualities, just as we human beings have, and Punch, although a small animal, had a large heart and a large understanding, and was a general favourite, for whom there was not a man in the troop who did not have a kind word and a caress. This in itself was a sufficient proof that he deserved it, and just as he had lived his life, always willing, plucky, and affectionate, so he died, full of pluck and affection to the end !

To shew you what we do for our horses when they are sick, I will quote from my diary ; and remember that we did no

more for Punch than for any other animal, only we did it with more affection.

"His not having thoroughly recovered from the effects of the 'dik kopf' is very much against him, for he has been fed on nothing but grass and bran for the past few weeks. We have drenched him three times with big doses of dop and quinine, the last one mixed with gruel, the only effect being to make him heavy and sleepy. We have steamed him twice—with camphor dissolved in methylated spirit, spread over a hot bran mash, and placed in a nose bag. After the first time a very slight yellow discharge came out of the near nostril, and after the second, a similar discharge, but very slight, came from both nostrils.

"It is very noticeable, that most of the cases we have had of the sickness, have commenced immediately after watering, and it seems to me as if the watering brings out the disease.

"At 9 p.m. gave Punch another drenching of dop, quinine, and gruel, and a right good steaming, and we put fresh warm blankets over him. As he seemed about the same, I left Sutherland to sit up and watch him until midnight, when he will be relieved by Paterson, with strict injunctions to call me, should there be any change for the worse.

"At 2.30 this morning (9th) Paterson woke me, and I went down at once, to find both his nostrils and mouth full of the yellow discharge, which was simply choking him. Even then he stood up to it like a man, and would not give in, never uttering groan or sound, although he was suffering agonies, and close upon the last gasp. The strange part of it was that he stood quite firm upon his pins. And there we stood, Paterson and I, in the dim light thrown by a small lantern, watching, and I did my best to encourage the poor sufferer by a deep and tender sympathy, conveyed to him through the magnetism of a soft, caressing touch, a sympathy that soothed his dying moments, and which, I feel sure, he thoroughly appreciated.

"At five minutes to three, he suddenly began to sway about, then fell, and in two minutes it was all over. Dear, faithful little friend, feeling my way into the darkness of night, even as you now are into the gloom of mystery, I am not ashamed to say that I had a good cry over the pangs and pains of your departure and of my great loss."

Some people say that our life here is as dull as ditch-water, but I do not agree with them. Of course, there is little or no amusement, the only relaxation being shooting and a little

fishing, which I get little time for ; so that I have to fall back on work, and without it, to me at least, life would be stale, unprofitable, and decidedly monotonous. But there is so much variety in mine, entering so largely as it does into matters of every kind—military, police, veterinary, magisterial, commercial, &c.—and full of interest as it is, in the study of animals and of humanity, which the varied types of the floating population help to vary, by throwing a life and colour into it, that I find it far from dull. On the contrary, it is full of interest and instruction. And when you take into consideration the fact that we are building up an empire that will rival the vast possessions of the old East India Company, a zest and flavour is imparted to the work, which makes it all the more palatable. Yet, on second thoughts, this is decidedly far-fetched, and those who try to compare the two, shew their ignorance of historical detail. In reality, there can be no comparison ; for when Old John Company first started operations in India, they did so in a country already made, teeming with population, crowded with towns and cities, largely cultivated, and doing a large internal, as well as external, trade, of a civilisation more ancient than our own, and abounding in wealth and riches.

Compared to this, what is Mashonaland ? A country inhabited, at the highest computation, by 100,000 people, superior maybe to the surrounding tribes in civilisation, but of a very rude order, shewn by a slightly better mode of cultivation, and by the production of a rough cutlery and form of agricultural implements, also of a coarse cloth manufactured from wild cotton, and of bags made from the bark of certain trees. Crude, indeed, by the side of the arts and manufactures of India, even a thousand years ago. A wretched, spiritless people these Mashonas evidently, without towns or cities, and living in villages in clans, or in clusters of huts occupied by families under independent chieftains, without even knowing the meaning of national cohesion or unity !

And yet I believe there is a great feature before the country, and the possibility of a vast empire growing round and about it, which may in the distant future compare favourably with Indian magnificence. Naturally, living to work and working to live as we are, all work and no play would make us dull boys ; but among the men the buoy of Hope plays a very prominent part, keeping their heads above the dead level of prevailing depression. With them, in fact, it has become a creed ever present, the pith of which can be summed up in two pithy words, "Up Country." And fluctuating, as Hope

ever does, between when and where, "Soon, soon," comes responsive echo, thought being first-born to wish; but as to "*where*," deadly silence!

Pennefather told us before leaving that we may expect to be moved within the next few months. I am sure I hope so, for the sake of all concerned. For now we are in "No Man's Land," a debatable strip of territory lying between the two rivers Macloutsie and Tuli, claimed both by Lobengula and Khama, and at least 200 miles from Victoria. Whereas, if we were in the country itself, we should have the satisfaction of having seen the El Dorado of our hopes; at the same time we would be all the better able to protect any claims or interests that we may be entitled to.

12th.—"Sent Zimba by waggon *en route* to Salisbury" is the first entry in my diary to-day. Interesting fact, no doubt, you retort, but who in the name of the inimitable Dickens is Zimba?

Zimba, it appears, is a chief whose country is north, or as he put it, in Swahili, or some medley of a language in which every now and then I could detect some Arabic, above Manica.

I have had several letters from Harris, informing me that he was on his way, and instructing me to treat him with every consideration, and to send him up to Salisbury as quickly and as comfortably as possible, as he was a prince in his own country, etc. etc., and yet again, etc. Considering that I have lived among Orientals practically all my life, and ever since I was a "chokra," his elaborate instructions rather amused me, and I had quite made up my mind to seeing an imposing personage, followed by a retinue of the usual rag-tag and bob-tail, but, lo and behold, on Monday last, imagine my disappointment, when the Prince arrives accompanied only by one wretched-looking creature, whom he calls his counsellor, with as little of the Vizier about him as there is of the Sultan about his master. Indeed, much against my will, I have to describe them as exceedingly like in appearance to some of the types that are any day to be seen perambulating the streets of Cairo, in seedy-looking, half European, half Oriental costume.

It is many years ago now since I was in Egypt, and my Arabic, therefore, has grown very shaky from want of practice; however, I aired all I could of it, and, as previously remarked, Zimba made use of a certain amount in the dialect he spoke, so that we managed to understand each other to a limited extent. It appears that he was imprisoned by the Portuguese officials, what for I cannot say, but as likely as not for nothing,

and that while he was being conveyed to Portugal, he and some others made good their escape from the steamer when she called at Cape Town, so the Company espoused his cause. From philosophical and philanthropic motives, purely, as you can imagine, and not with any object in view of making political capital out of it, and they are giving him a free passage through their territory up to his own country.

Mashilia he called it, but I cannot find such a name on the map, and yet I have a vague sort of idea that I have heard of it, and I have been wondering whether it can have anything to do with "Zumbo" on the Zambesi, and my ignorance of geography has quite appalled me. As far as I could make out, Zimba bears no love for the Portuguese, whom he abused roundly, and in the choicest of expletives, I have no doubt, if I could have understood him better. I am glad he has gone, however, for, whether they made too much of him down below or not, he was inclined to be bumptious, and becoming an unmitigated nuisance !

Three or four weeks ago, you may remember, I wrote and told you that Pennefather (and the weather plus sickness between them) had abolished horse post, and substituted cart and oxen ! Well, now, to give you a fair cut-and-dry sample of how affairs are managed—or, mismanaged as I am sure you would say—between Harris at one end and him at the other, since Pennefather's order has been put into execution, I have received no less than three mandates from Harris, each one cancelling the former.

I am now writing to you on the 23rd, but I will go back to the 12th, the day on which I received the first order, and refer you once more to my inevitable diary !

Sent seven men under Paterson across the river, to re-establish the post stations between this and Victoria, in accordance with a telegram from Rhodes through Harris. Just what I thought would happen when Pennefather withdrew men and horses, for I felt sure they would never permit it. And yet (as I have previously stated) there is a good deal to be said in defence of his action, as Rhodes and Harris would be bound to admit, if they were to take on the duty of post riders for a month or two. With the rivers impassable, and no means of getting men and horses across either dry or wet, the men mostly down with fever, the horses nearly, if not all, dead, the post riders, when Pennefather went up, were of no use whatever. Of course, with boats on the rivers, specially selected salted horses and men, the rainy season drawing to a

close, and the cold weather approaching, there is nothing to stop the line working. While even during the rains, with proper arrangements for housing and feeding men and horses, as well as for getting them over the rivers dry, it would be quite feasible.

But the arrangements, if any, have been truly abominable ; and I fail to see what Tye and his commissariat have so far done to improve matters. The utter want of system and organisation, at the expense of the unfortunate men and horses, is simply diabolical, at the same time that it is distinctly culpable. Yet the uncomplaining and cheerful way the former have put up with it, is a positive marvel to me. Everything, in fact, has been left to haphazard, with Chance, the only inspector on the road, in sole and exclusive charge.

14th.—Had a telegram from Harris, by runner, at eight a.m., cancelling re-establishment of post stations, ordered in his last telegram.

22nd.—Got two wires from Harris, as follows : “ I reaffirm orders to re-establish post stations with salted horses, only, however, to be used for special despatches, when so marked. This is final instruction.” I fervently hope so, as it is the third I have received on the subject within a fortnight. The other runs : “ Inform C.O. officially of latest instructions for establishing posts up to Victoria, for special despatches only ; but get them ready at once. Dr. Jameson arrives Cape Town this week from Gazaland.” I expect C.O. will be quite as sick as I am of his instructions, more recurring than a refractory decimal. Why cannot Rhodes and Harris, or whoever it is that is responsible for such cursed indecision, make up their minds for once and all. If Rhodes’ mind is too great to descend to detail so trivial, Harris’ is not too small to cope with it. For surely it cannot be so momentous a question to decide. Either a necessity does, or does not exist, for the rapid conveyance of certain special despatches. If the latter, well and good ; if the former, then establish a permanent line, and have done with it. But put it on a proper footing, *i.e.* organise a system, and there is nothing simpler, the initial cost of which would be a mere drop, as compared to the damage and loss inflicted on human and equine flesh alone, in a single rainy season. An economy that recommends itself to every point of view as being humane, yet thoroughly practical ; and with Tye, who holds the purse-strings, and has *carte blanche* apparently, as an influential representative, there is nothing whatever to prevent this being done.

Now as to the other part of the telegram. We were led to

believe that the Portuguese troops were for Mozambique. A blind, evidently! What game are they up to now, and why has Jameson gone to Cape Town? So Gazaland was his objective, and that is why Dillon, with the 25 giants, the 500 rifles, and the 50,000 rounds, were wanted. The latter I can understand, but not the former. If there was an absolute necessity for them, which evidently there was not, as he appears to have accomplished his mission without them, he could have got plenty of giants up country. If I mistake not, Gazaland belongs to, or is under the protection of the Portuguese; but Gungunhana and his people are of Zulu descent, and very independent; in fact, I hear that the former stand rather in awe of them, so it is palpable what Jameson's objective has been, and as a result further complications are impending. The English papers that we have lately seen seem, however, to be pretty certain that the Colossus has squared the Manica question. I hope so, but time, in any case, will shew.

Talking about Johnson the other day, Homan gave me a short account of the origin of the B.T.A. It seems that Sir Sidney Shippard was rather anxious to get Khama into his clutches, or, at all events, in touch with him. Not seeing his way clearly to accomplish this, he suggested to Johnson and Heany, who were then in the B.B.P. at Mafeking, the idea of taking up one or two waggon loads of goods to Shoshong and trading there. The idea took root, and not long after blossomed into action, Johnson, Heany, Barrow, and one or two others, the brothers Fry, I believe, taking their discharge, and forming a trading syndicate. Their next step was to go to Shoshong, and obtain a concession granting them a trading monopoly, which included mineral and other rights within his territory. Armed with this, Johnson went down to Cape Town, and, after some difficulty, succeeded in raising £1000. The venture doing so well, and exceeding all expectation, was soon floated into the Bechuanaland Trading Association (Mosenthal and Co., of Port Elizabeth, being very large shareholders), and eventually threw out an offshoot in the Bechuanaland Exploration Company!

I give this, of course, for what it is worth, so you must take it at your valuation. I expect Sir Sidney would smile if he read it. Rather a crude way of getting at Khama, who has always been friendly, amenable, and under missionary influence!

St. Patrick's Day. The St. Pietersberg coach came right into camp for the first time at four o'clock this afternoon, by the

new or Nesbitt's road, as we call it, because he superintended the cutting of it.

Although no kind and thoughtful friend sent me out a sprig of the sweet little shamrock in remembrance of the national Saint, I did not forget the sanctity of the day—all the more sanctified by the passage of 1510 anniversaries over his tomb! A mere drop, after all, in the ocean of infinity, and but a link in the cycle of ever cycling age! So amid the human chatter and artificial clatter all round me, deep down in the sacred silence of my own thoughts, I drank success to St. Patrick and Ireland! And as I stood outside our dingy mess hut, under the starlit canopy of heaven, the soft splendour of the moon threw a mystic glamour over the scene, and the stars, glowing with the brilliancy of bright eyes eagerly expectant, added to its enchanting magnificence.

As I gazed at it in rapture, a black cloud, swanlike, sailed across the moon, and my eyes, caught by a solitary ray of light, seemed fascinated. Following it upward, I noticed a star more beautiful than all, shining serenely and steadily at me with a steadiness that bewildered me. Looking up at it with unflinching gaze, the stare of fascination was there no longer, but in its place I found a smile of sympathy ineffably sweet and more bewitching by far, which I returned with all the steadiness and force within me.

Then all at once I saw Sympathy stealing silently but swiftly along the thin ray of light, and suddenly an electric shock ran through me, and, the eyes of my mind opening mechanically, I began to see with a power and perception that seemed to pierce through space and penetrate into infinity; but, with the rapidity of a lightning-flash, the black cloud, gliding past, swallowed up the star! And when it had passed, although I looked again and again, Sympathy had fled, and in its place all the stars were sparkling with a merriment of mischief, while many of them were winking, blinking, and twinkling at each other.

But that one glance, short-lived as it was, satisfied me, for I felt that, in spite of the flight of time, Ireland was not forgotten by the individuality whose purity and strength of character swept through it like a whirlwind of cleansing fires, that purified and elevated it beyond measure, and that sympathy was hers!

Sympathy, that mental fluid, diviner than the nectar of the gods, glorious solace of immortality, that God-like attribute and holy parent of Love, which is the link indissoluble between

the various kingdoms of Nature, that by its magnetic touch makes the whole world kin—itself one of the chief moral attributes that combine in the one Universal Inspiration. Yet in spite of its sublimity, sympathy is not too sublime to stoop with a smile from the highest of the high to the lowliest of the lowly, while we poor pygmies, blind in the arrogance of our own conceit, look down upon it as a mere abstract quality, simply a fellow-feeling that makes us wondrous kind !

But what is this feeling after all? whence from and whither? This feeling that scientists object to as dominating human reason in its efforts to discriminate between the right and the wrong of the most vital questions affecting life, its origin, development, and end !

Surely it is more than a mere sensation, emotion, or sentiment? But if only a simple mechanism of nerves, a system of mental telephony between brain, mind, and physical contact, evolved from protoplasm, and ending with final dissolution, how is it that a lesser or weaker faculty can override a greater or stronger? How is it that in organisms possessing all the characteristics of coolness, caution, and calculation, in face of mature and calm deliberation, feeling masters and gets the better of reason? And how often it happens that, against our better judgment, we will do what we know to be foolish or unwise, simply because our feelings carry us away.

And yet science will try to make me believe, in opposition to a pregnant power within me, call it what you will, that feeling is nothing: only a perception, nothing more. But believe me, if we only knew it, it is a force that lives, moves, and has its being in all Nature, and is a part of the whole great force that inspires us! I must apologise for this moral out-break, evoked by the spontaneous sympathy of a departed saint, and bring this effort to a rapid conclusion.

The river has been constantly fluctuating, falling quite low by the 20th, impassable on the 25th, and down again on the 31st, so that five waggons and a cart got across.

I had my first magisterial case a few days ago, and there was a certain spice of the comic element that tickled me immensely. Mr. Hasell, manager of the B.T.A., came and complained that Mr. Thornton, one of his subordinates whom he discharged a fortnight ago, had assaulted him on the previous night without any provocation. On enquiry I decided that, pending an ultimatum from the Association, Hasell was to provide Thornton with board and lodging, and

that he was not to enter the store, under penalty of being turned out of the camp.

The cream of the whole thing lies in the fact that we are under no law here, and I hold no magisterial power, but law and order must be maintained, so I try to administer the law of common sense as best I can.

And the comicality of the situation is in the appearances of the two combatants. Hasell is a diminutive, red-faced, red-haired, irascible German, who makes up for his physical deficiencies by the ferocity and magnitude of his temper, which is simply vile. While Thornton, a thin, knock-kneed creature, mild and spectacled, looks more like an elongated scarecrow than anything else, and as if he would think twice before saying "boo" to a goose. In spite of it all, weak knees included, this is the second encounter between them, and on each occasion Ginger, as the men call the German, has been the aggressor, and come off second best. He certainly was an awful-looking object when he came before me, two unlovely black eyes, a large cut, and a bump on his forehead, while all that he had inflicted on his opponent were a slight scratch or two. He has always been excessively polite to all of us, though I hear he has a bad name amongst the men, and I have invariably found him apologising for the "drouble" he was giving me, although it was no "drouble" for him to do "any dings dat I ask him!"

Yesterday Goddy and I rode down to the lower drift, and anything to equal the tameness of the quail I have never seen. We had no guns, and that this fact must have been an intuition on their part I cannot help thinking, as they allowed us to kick them up, and then only took the trouble to fly a few yards away. They looked plump, and in good condition enough, and not as if they had come a long journey; but the questions are, Where have they come from? and whither away? Are they the identical bird that is found in Egypt in the early part of the year, who have flown south?

Another sure and certain sign of approaching civilisation is the arrival in camp, on the 31st, of the special correspondent of the *Cape Argus* and *Johannesburg Star*, a Mr. W. E. Fairbridge, who amused me immensely by calling on me and asking for an interview. So, if to regale a man with a cigar and whisky, and have a chat with him on local and general topics, is an interview, then yours truly has purchased a few minutes' cheap notoriety, which, like civility, is becoming dirt cheap!

CHAPTER XXVII.

TULI.

ADAIR CAMPBELL AND ROACH—CHEAP NOTORIETY.

From 1st to 30th April, 1891.

A RATHER amusing story about two of the Pioneers has reached us on reliable authority.

It appears that there is one Adair Campbell, who went up with the Pioneers as a subaltern, described as a many-sided individual, or an individual with much side on, and very much given to writing flowery effusions to his friends at home. It so happened that in one of these, more flowery than usual, the following sentence appeared: "I am orderly officer to-day, and am again to-morrow, but I do not mind, because my heart is in my work."

The letter in due course, as all such letters do, appeared in a local journal, and, oddly enough, the paper in question turned up at Salisbury, as all such papers do.

It was not very many days after their arrival, and Campbell met Roach, another subaltern in the corps, of a very different—the rough-and-ready Colonial—type, who, by odd chance or coincidence, happened at the time to be reading, not only the journal, but the very letter in question.

In a moment the former tried to snatch it from the latter, who, putting it behind his back, said, "I had intended to keep this quiet; but as you have been so beastly rude, I shall show it to everyone in camp"—which he accordingly did, Campbell, in consequence, getting an unmerciful chaffing all round.

To make matters worse, Jameson, meeting him not many days after, asked what he meant by writing such arrant nonsense.

"I didn't think my friend would be such a fool as to publish it," replied Campbell.

"Well, I didn't think you were such a d——d fool as to write it," retorted Jameson. "I gave you credit for more sense."

When the novelty of the thing was wearing off, Campbell, bent on revenge, one day tackled Roach, who is a big, loose-jointed fellow, with big feet, and commenced chaffing him about them.

"What blank big feet you have, old chap!" he continued; "canoes aren't in it. Have to get a special size made for you, I take it—have you not?"

"Yes, they are ra—a—ther big," drawled Roach, putting on a very demure face for the occasion. "I take thirteens; but then, don't you see, it's not only my feet, old chap; my heart is in my boots!"—and he chuckled.

Total collapse of Campbell, who has given up further angling, wrangling, or trying conclusions with the ready "Roach."

1st.—Bismarck's seventy-sixth birthday. What a coincidence that Fate should have selected this day, of all the days in the year, to usher in so great a genius and massive an individuality as the greatest German statesman of this century, and many others, for the matter of that. It certainly made no fool of him, although he has made fools of others to any extent. I have not had very much to tell you, except a heap of minor incidents belonging to the exalted order of trifles light as air, so have postponed writing until the end of the month.

Two exceptions to this, however, that have been of broader interest, have been the threatened Boer trek, and our complications with the Portuguese over the Pungwe route, which I will speak of first. On the 11th I received the following wire from Harris: "By Mr. Rhodes' orders, hold twenty-five men in readiness to start and permanently occupy a good position in Chibi's country, probably near the Nuanetsi. Final instructions will come in a day or two."

Whether this had anything to do with the vague rumours we have been lately hearing with regard to a threatened Boer trek over the Crocodile, and into our territory, I cannot say; but it certainly looks very like it, as the position I have been ordered to take up in Chibi's country commands one of the principal drifts on the Crocodile, and one of the main hunting roads made by the Boers in former times, and there is nothing like being on the safe side.

In support of this, the Transvaal is full of men of the filibuster type, and Rhodes, as I have previously pointed out to you, has many enemies there, who, failing to levy blackmail, and finding that abuse falls flat, would not hesitate to raise and

organise an invasion of our territory if they could. And they would have little or no difficulty in persuading lots of Boers to join them, from the fact alone that it has been an annual custom with them, for many years, to organise shooting expeditions, cross the Crocodile, and penetrate into the country on the other side. And it would be almost impossible to convince the Boer that he has no longer a right to do it without getting a license from the Company. In fact, there lies in this point alone fuel enough for a tidy blaze!

What amuses me about the telegram is the number twenty-five again, but this time, no giants need apply! Why always twenty-five? I wonder. Is it pure coincidence, or does Harris's *military* mind consider that I can spare this number exactly, whereas thirty might cripple me. That big men are not to be specially selected, is a conclusive proof that this twenty-five, at all events, are meant for real work. Curiously enough, while on this topic, a mail came in from Victoria, bringing me a communication from Dillon, the first I have received, reporting the deaths of troopers Clarke and Kirkman, I am sorry to say, the former from fever, the latter from some organic disease. Further, pointing out ten men as being quite unfit for the class of work, all or most of them, who have been out only a short time from England. Poor fellows, they little knew what they were coming to, and have done their best. What more can a man do, after all? And how different has the reality been from the dream of their anticipations! Dillon gave no other information, except that they had got no further than Victoria, and hardly deigning to mention what they had gone through, though I have heard, from other sources, that they had a very rough time of it. It was not until the 23rd, however, that the long-expected instructions, with reference to posting a party in Chibi's country, arrived, confirming my suspicions that it was in connection with the threatened trek, so that there was some foundation for the reports in circulation.

And to make confirmation doubly sure, Grey, commanding the B.B.P., arrived the next day with Bodilly, and drove down to Rhodes' Drift, for the purpose of making a sketch and a report upon that portion of the river.

In consequence of the last-mentioned orders, however, the post in Chibi's country is not to be held, and instead, we are to watch the principal drifts on the Crocodile that lead into our possessions. With this object in view, I have sent Barnett, a subaltern in the same regiment as Capper, who has been

sent up by Rhodes, with a party of men to cut a road to one of the lower drifts, next to the Pont drift, and about thirty miles below it, Grey and Bodilly leaving on the following day to join them.

This same day I sent a party of twenty men, under Hicks-Beach, to Rhodes' Drift, to make a small earthwork, to command it, and to examine everyone crossing over, and, if necessary, stop them.

This looks as if business was meant on both sides, but I am of opinion that it will, more or less, end in smoke, and that, when the Boers see we mean business, they will let the matter drop and die out quietly. For I always think of what George Washington said, in one of his speeches to the Houses of Congress, a thought that he borrowed from some old Roman, "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace." A maxim that we, as a nation, would do well to act on, and in conformity with which I would like to see more men arrive on the scene.

But I was nearly omitting to tell you what Zeederberg, who came in on the 28th, by his own coach from Pietersburg, told me. According to him, there is not the slightest chance of a disturbance with the Boers, nor does he think that the party under Adendorff and Barend Voster will even attempt to cross the Crocodile. Exactly what I have thought and have been saying all along, and if a shot is fired over it, it will be by downright blundering, or accidentally on purpose, as I once heard an Irishman say, with a great deal of meaning in what he said.

And now for the other side, the Pungwe route. These excitable Portuguese, it seems, have been turning rusty over something or other, Manica, I suppose, of which we made a remarkably clean grab, and I have no doubt that Jameson's Gazaland mission is also rankling, for they are making all kinds of objections to our making use of it. The finish of which will be, I should not be surprised, in our turning them out of the country altogether. Then, heigho for a reign of partial peace, for we have the Matabele to reckon with yet, and the Boer trek is not disposed of.

At present I see no chance either of going or getting up country in any way, and no chance of leave; so I would not advise you to come out just yet. I cannot say anything more definite yet, because, as you will see for yourself, things are so unsettled out here, and nothing definite has been arranged, otherwise I should have advised you to come out long ago.

I am sure that you will now thoroughly appreciate the difficulties we labour under, and the plight that external causes and circumstances have placed us in, but things would go ahead rapidly enough if the Portuguese would only exercise a little common sense, instead of allowing excitement to addle the little they have, thus clogging our movements.

Having agreed to let us use the Pungwe route, and our arrangements to run steamers on the river, and coaches up to Salisbury being completed, so at least I am informed, they turn round, and refuse to let us utilise it.

This does not look as if Jameson's statement were coming true, nor does it appear hopeful for Johnson's prediction about the rush of over 10,000 through Beira. Of course, this state of things cannot continue, and the question will have to be settled one way or the other.

We must have the Pungwe route, and if the fire-eating Portuguese will not let us have it quietly, we shall have to take it from them by force. I have no doubt this must come about in the course of a few months—the peaceful settlement at all events—for if Rhodes is the man I take him for, he has by this time made up his mind not to stand any hanky-panky, and I quite believe that his plan of action has already been clearly and definitely mapped out.

That the Imperial Government would have their say, I have no doubt; but once Rhodes carries it out—and he is just the man to do it—he will have committed them to a certain policy, and their simplest way out of the difficulty would be either to accept the position with a good grace, or leave it alone with a still better.

Mundell, who, you will remember, took D'Andrade and Gouveia down country, arrived here on the 9th with a party of thirty-seven recruits, not a moment too soon, as we are very short-handed, Jameson's Giants having made a great hole in our total, while fever has incapacitated a large percentage! He has been down as far as Kimberley, and, as he expressed it, "Had a rattling good time of it." It is as well for humanity that opinions differ between the stiffness of sheer obstinacy, and the deep universality of Catholicism, and that while some of us are stiff in the error of our opinion, others have the grace to part with golden opinion gratis and free of charge. Certainly, to judge by his looks, Mundell does not look half the man he did; and yet he has had a good time of it and is thoroughly satisfied; but there is no accounting for taste. Give me, for my

part, one hour of Nature rather than a year of Artificiality. To me, high mountains are a feeling, but the hum of human cities torture. As a result of his good time he has brought back articles for toilette that would grace a lady's boudoir, and they look so out of place amid the surrounding squalor.

As I have told you more than once, this is the country, *par excellence*, for the student of human nature, for here he will find types of every variety of humanity under the sun, and representatives of all classes and degrees, and it is

“Gold ! Gold ! Gold !
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,”

that brings them here in hot haste, to repent hereafter at leisure. For as dear old Hood, most human of men, whose heart was overflowing with the milk of human kindness and the honey of a generous nature, and whose river of life flowed serenely with the sublimity of human pathos, through which ran the current of true and natural wit, says :

“How widely its agencies vary—
To save—to ruin—to curse—to bless—
As even its minted coins express,
Now stamped with the image of Good Queen Bess,
And now of a bloody Mary.”

And what heartburnings and disappointments, jealousies and bickerings, leading to crime and even bloodshed, is it not responsible for?

Finch and Erskine, on its quest or conquest bent, have passed through. The former was a subaltern in the Life Guards, who has retired. A fine fellow, I should think—agreeable, level-headed, tough, and cut out for a life of this sort. The very man to do well out here. We are getting quite a contingent of ex-Guardsmen, and men such as Gascoigne and Finch speak well for them. The latter is an Honourable, very young for his years, but with the making of a man in him.

Mair, who has been up here and returned to Tuli, says we may expect to have the telegraph completed as far as Tuli in another month. Standford, he informed me, has returned to Cape Town for good.

Mother Patrick, the Sisters, and Father Prestige arrived here on the 21st; but I am sorry to say that as soon as the weather gets more settled, we shall lose them, as they are going on to Salisbury, where, of course, their services will be

much more needed, though my men will, I know, miss them very much.

We had quite the mild excitement of a small alarm the other morning. I was not sleeping very well, and, as my wont is, I was lying indulging in various thoughts of present phases and future prospects, when pop ! I heard a shot, then pop ! pop ! pop ! a second, a third, and a fourth, at regular intervals of about half a minute. Judging from the sound, they appeared to be some distance off. The sentry, however, luckily turned out the guard, who, on getting to the bottom of the hill, discovered the cause, just under my hut, and not more than eighty yards from it.

Ever since the arrival of the Sisters, the B.B.P. waggon, which brought them up, has been standing on this spot, and the trooper in charge, it appears, left his bandolier on a sack of mealies, which in some very mysterious way had caught fire, and when the guard arrived on the scene, they found the former well in the middle of the blaze, accounting for the fusilade !

The natives who come and work for us are a curious medley of specimens—Mangwatos, Matabele, and Makalakas, all mingling together in quite a friendly way. All of them on the same errand bent, and that is to make a convenience of, and all they can out of, the verdant white man. But I do not blame them, for do not we the same, with all our high principles? As a rule, they stay for a month or two at the outside, and when they have made what they consider enough—and I must say, they are very easily satisfied—they clear, and make room for a fresh lot ; and so their little drama goes on ! We wake up one fine morning, to find all the boys who had just learnt to make themselves useful gone, and we give vent to our feelings in different ways, according to our own peculiar idiosyncrasies—some in strong language, others in calm reflection—take on a new crowd, and begin all over again.

Personally, I have found reflection the better and certainly more philosophical plan. A torrent of language doubtless acts as a safety-valve, and relieves the injured feelings ; but here, for once in a way, I find reason superior to feeling, and reflection, like an opiate, soothes and allays irritation. Evidently there is a sort of tacit understanding between the beggars, for no sooner has one set gone than another turns up !

Their method of smoking is very peculiar, and certainly is one of the most uncomfortable I have ever seen. Making a

small hole in the ground, they place the tobacco—or rather a mixture of it and a drug—on some live coals at the bottom, covering it over with a daub of moist mud. Inserting a hollow reed into this, they lie on their faces, or, squatting, bend down and draw up the smoke, all of which they inhale. To such an extent do they carry it, that three-fourths of them have a chronic bark, quite as loud and as irritating as whooping-cough. Yet it has an infatuation for them they cannot shake off, although I am informed that many of them die from it. The cough, which seems to be of a suffocating nature, ought in itself to choke them off, I should have thought; but there is no accounting for human vagaries, is there?

The up-country mail that has been missing ever since the 12th of December, lost on the road by the post riders, who were said to have been attacked by lions, was brought in by Lynch and Thompson, who found it behind a bush close to the road, in a "slightly damp condition."

We have had so many deaths from horse sickness, that I must once more allude to it, and to the widespread theory regarding it, which prevails in South Africa, assigning the cause to the fact of eating moistened grass; it is the rule out here not to graze horses as long as the dew is on the ground. This deadly disease is prevalent from the Cape up to the Zambesi, and from being comparatively mild in the Southern portion, increases in intensity further north; the basin of the Crocodile river, and the region lying between it and the Zambesi, being by far the deadliest.

During my stay here and at Macloutsie the B.B.P. and ourselves have suffered most heavily, losing about 97 per cent. of horses from this cursed malady, which in its destructive deadliness always reminds me of that awful and mysterious scourge which is so fatal to humanity in the East, and which so far, like itself, has baffled and defied science. I have always taken the greatest care of my horses, and the greatest interest in watching each individual case, in doing all that was possible to do for them. I have now seen some hundreds die, sometimes at the rate of eleven a week. The conclusion I have come to, rightly or wrongly I will not presume to say, is that these deaths have had nothing to do with grazing in the early morning, but that the infection, like cholera, is in the air and is inhaled, whether a horse is in the stable or not.

My orders on the subject have been most stringent, and are, I know, strictly carried out. Though the horses never go out

grazing until the sun has been up long enough to evaporate the dew, the mortality among them has been terrific, and, as already stated, three per cent. only have recovered. Some of them, well to all outward appearance, have been suddenly seized with the most violent symptoms, and died within two hours; others fought against it with tremendous pluck, and without even a groan or a murmur for twenty-four or thirty-six hours; others again gave in to it in less than half the time, their groans and agonies being almost human and realistically heart-rending, while only two or three struggled heroically on in a dazed, stunned kind of way, and held out for four or five days before submitting to the inevitable.

Horses that have never been out of the stable, except for exercise in the afternoon, and that have been fed on bran, mealies, and forage, have been attacked in the same way and succumbed quite as rapidly. In all cases of *post mortem*, and we have had a good many, which I attended, the lungs were entirely diseased and perforated, and in many instances they were rotten.

In the low-lying veldt, and in all depressions and valleys, those especially watered by a river, heavy morning mists, which hang low, are a noticeable feature, more so in the cold and dry seasons; and it seems to me that horses who are exposed to them must inhale a malaria, which goes into the system and attacks the lungs, doing its work insidiously and without detection, from lack of outward or visible signs—the first external signs being languor and heaviness, followed quickly, sometimes instantaneously, by feverish symptoms which rapidly increase, along with a yellowish frothy discharge from the nostrils, and in some cases a swelling of the head—and before a remedy, much less a cure, can be effected, the poor creature is dead. In a few words, the impression left on my mind is that it is a combination of low fever and lung complications suppressed internally, which, when the mischief is done and it is too late, breaks out externally. The secret, I fully believe, lies in a nutshell, and if the external mischief could be detected at the outset, or within a few hours of it—taken in time, in fact—a remedy, if not more, would be found to nip it in the bud, and so save the valuable life of many a noble animal. This is merely a suggestion I throw out, for in the face of scientific research I would not presume to assert an opinion, if not more reliable cause, than that which is generally advanced.

The fact that the severity of the sickness is far more intense

in the uncivilised and wild portions than in those parts which have been some time occupied, and that it is also so in the lowlands in comparison to the highlands, is food for reflection, and appears to substantiate the air and malarial theory to an appreciable extent.

For it is generally recognised that malaria disappears or diminishes very considerably before civilisation, and this takes place when a wild country has been occupied for some time, and when the bush is cleared away, the undergrowth burnt, and the soil turned up, provided, of course, that it is at a reasonable level above the sea, say at least from 1500 to 1800 feet, and not a swamp or marsh, or low-lying alluvial deposit. Say, however, for argument sake, that disease ending in death can be caused simply by eating moistened or poisoned grass ; (1) why should some animals escape altogether ? (2) why should others get it and recover ? (3) why should the effect be quicker on some than others, except, perhaps, from superiority of stamina or constitution ? And why should a like proportion of animals, who are never exposed to this risk, get the same symptoms, present the same organic appearance, and die in fact of exactly the same disease as those who have run all the risks ? With regard to the air theory, the first three questions might likewise be asked, but the answers are beyond me, except to conclude, from the terrific mortality that we had at Macloutsie and Tuli, that the germs of the disease were in the air, and to leave to great and glorious science to produce the solution of the mystery from the womb of futurity.

One more item. Harman arrived here from Salisbury, and passed through to Pilapwie. I found it very hard to get anything out of him. By dint of questions and cross-questions, however, I elicited from him that Mashonaland as a goldfield was nothing wonderful, but there was certainly gold there. I asked him what it was like in comparison to Johannesburg, and he replied that the gold ore was not so good, but the facilities for working it, viz., wood, water, and native labour, were more plentiful and cheaper.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TULI.

A COUNTRY OF UNCERTAINTIES—A MONTH OF STIRRING INCIDENTS.

From 1st May to 31st May, 1891.

A GAIN I have put off writing to you until the end of the month, not because I had not plenty to tell you about, but for various reasons, chief among them that I have been very busy. On the whole, indeed, it has been an exceptionally stirring month, teeming with incidents, social, political, natural, and startling. Death has been busy, I am sorry to say, building up the colossal statue slowly but steadily. Civilisation, too, advancing with rapid strides on the wings of electricity, has at last brought us into touch with its own great centre, and we are even grateful for so small a mercy, though many inwardly and outwardly have anathematised it up hill and down dale. Science, too, has come to enquire into the secrets of the Zimbabwe ruins. While the presence of two ladies speaks volumes, so I will say no more.

The Boer trek and Pungwe route problems still stare us in the face, and I am afraid I cannot inform you of any favourable development in either, and in consideration of the fact that the latter is likely to prove the more serious of the two, I intend to take it first.

Early in the month information reached us that the Portuguese had closed the Pungwe route to us entirely, and there seemed no prospect of any kind of settlement being arrived at for several months, and the conclusion I came to was that, in our own interests, the best thing that could happen would be for the Portuguese to attack us. Easy enough on our part to fight it out, and take away the whole strip of coast line from Beira up to the Zambesi. Bother international complications and Imperial interference, but take it first, and let them object after. You will think I am growing bellicose and filibustering in my ideas. Perhaps I am, but so would you if you were here, and impatient to see an undertaking

that you were concerned in, no matter in how small a way, dying from inaction.

But, as I said to you in a previous scrawl, this is the route the people will chiefly come, so the Company ought at present to let the Pungwe road slide, and concentrate all their energies and spare cash in improving it and connecting it by means of a coach line with Victoria and Salisbury, so as to encourage people to come in, and for this reason alone they ought to give Zeederberg every encouragement, and a subsidy to start at once. They have done splendidly in the rapid way they have pushed on the telegraph, and now they should turn their attention to conveyances.

On the 19th news reached us that the Pungwe route was again open; so, if true, the Portuguese are evidently afraid to proceed to extremities. I presume that, on second thoughts, they see for themselves the madness of attempting to fight us; so, choosing the wiser plan of discretion, they are adopting conciliatory measures. They will certainly cut their own throats by an offensive policy, and no one but themselves will lose by it. You see that it is a moral impossibility to secure reliable information, so I will not believe the latest until I know it to be an absolute fact, though now that we shall soon have the wire here, it may improve; but so far there is no depending on a word we hear. As to my leaving Tuli, I cannot say when I shall, or where I shall go. I hope to get out of it by the end of July, or beginning of August at the latest; but it is no more possible to tell what a day may bring forth, in this country of uncertainties, than it is to fly.

On the 2nd and 3rd I rode down to Rhodes' Drift, and took a look all round, crossing over to the other side, and having altered certain arrangements made by Hicks-Beach, who had nothing either unusual or interesting to report, I returned here, and on the 6th I sent Barnett, who had in the meantime finished the road and come back, with a detachment of thirty men and four waggons to occupy Masebi's Drift, and make an earthwork to command it.

On the 13th Grey and Bodilly came in from their inspection of the lower drifts, but owing to fresh instructions they had to return, and go still farther down than they have been.

Two days after I received two telegrams from Sir Fred Carrington, one ordering me to send fifty men and a machine gun to Sterkstroom Drift, the other asking me to inform him

how many mounted men I shall have as a movable column after guarding the drifts.

As I had received no previous instructions of any kind, placing us under Imperial officers, I waited, and, quite as I expected, was informed, in the usual circumbendibus method in force here, by Tye showing me a private letter from Harris to himself, saying that Sir Fred Carrington had been appointed to command from Mafeking up the Limpopo, to the Indian Ocean, with Willoughby as his lieutenant, to command Tuli and the drifts eastward.

I sent replies accordingly, informing Carrington of my strength, and shewing him that I had not even sufficient men to send to Sterkstroom Drift, much less any available for a flying column, but that as soon as Hicks-Beach was relieved by a detachment of the B.B.P. at Rhodes' Drift, I should be in a position to carry out the former. On the same day, the 19th, Laurie, with a detachment of the B.B.P., arrived here, leaving the next day for Rhodes' Drift, and five days after, on the 23rd, Hicks-Beach and party, having been relieved by the above, marched in.

And that evening we had a total eclipse of the moon, commencing about 6.30 and lasting until 9.10. Carrington's appointment, stretching as it does right along the line of demarcation between the Transvaal and the Protectorate, is evidently an earnest of the policy of the Imperial Government, and of their intention to uphold British supremacy in South Africa, by supporting British enterprise.

This is good, and just as I thought when Sir Henry Loch and Rhodes were up at Macloutsie, that there was, if necessary, more than moral support in the mere fact of his presence; indeed, I construed the act into a decided exposition of Imperial activity. And that Sir Henry himself is responsible for the vigour and energy infused into its hitherto dormant action, proves, as I said before, the reality of the iron hand under the concealment of the silken glove.

Yet, why all this ado about nothing, or, at all events, next to nothing? It may be, of course, that Rhodes and Sir Henry have authentic information that accounts for the energy of the action taken, but, for all that, I place great reliance upon what Zeederberg told me, first of all because, in spite of his Dutch descent, his proclivities are British; secondly, going about the Transvaal so constantly as he does, he would be sure to learn what was going on; and thirdly, it would

be impossible for a movement of this nature to be kept dark.

In any case, however, Sir Henry has taken the safest and the surest way to stop any aggression by his prompt and vigorous measures, and, after all, perhaps it is as well, in this land of Brag, to make yourself heard, especially when you know that you are well able to follow it up. Just a polite intimation, or a passive invitation to come on and take the consequences, after the fashion of the Irishman trailing his coat in the mud with his left hand, while he clutches a stout shillelagh in his right, which he tries to conceal, as, putting on his pleasantest look, and in the choicest blarney, he invites the innocent abroad to "thread on the tail of his coat"!

But it is the magnificence and magnitude of Sir Frederic's command that staggers me, covering a front of over 1000 miles, and running across more than half the breadth of the Continent. Stupendous enough to make the Iron Duke squirm, and our Only General wince, and to transpose a famous *mot*, it will be still more magnificent when there is war!

But I cannot let this opportunity pass without congratulating his lordship of the Limpopo—for amid the surrounding haze I see a barony plainly looming—on his good fortune in having so able a company promoter, and so persistent a cigarette smoker, as his second in command! Indeed, so great are his ability and persistence—both of them worthy of a better cause—that should he fail to confound the advancing Boers by Flotations and Quotations (in capital letters, please), he will, at all events, be able to provide cover for his men behind clouds of his own inventive creation! Clouds that have evidently put the fiery Pennefather in the shade, for there is even no mention made of him; and, if I might be allowed to make a mild suggestion, the ocean end of the command should be entrusted to him, for it would afford him every opportunity of a good sea dip, as well as a dip into the language and music of the sad sea waves, where he and they might try to outvie each other as to who can roar the loudest!

You will, I know, accuse me of having descended from the sublimity of a grave topic to the ridicule of flippant frivolity, and yet I was never so *serious* in all my life. You will, at all events, agree with me that life without a jest, or a dash of pleasantry, would indeed be infinitely staler than —; but I can find no comparison strong enough to express myself, so you must supply the omission yourself.

To continue the subject, however, and to substantiate my opinion, on the 25th I rode out about six miles with Llewellyn, along the road to Rhodes' Drift. During the ride, we came across a waggon outspanned, and had a talk and a cup of tea with the owner and two others, who are going up to Mashonaland to settle, and with this object in view, they are taking farming implements, seeds, &c., with them. They appeared to be Englishmen, and the owner gave me the impression of being most intelligent and well spoken. He has been in the Transvaal some years, knows the country thoroughly, and has only very recently trekked right through it. He pooh-poohed the idea of the Boer trek. In fact, from all he saw and heard at Pietersburg, which is, he informs me, the headquarters of the supposed trek, he concluded that it was not coming off at all.

Of course, I know that in accepting such statements I lay myself open to argument, but I always make it a point to accept any information, but with much caution, taking care to sift it as thoroughly as I can, before I even attempt to place in it the slightest reliance; and I have come to the conclusion that there is much truth in the above.

To conclude, yesterday the 31st, Mandy and Armstrong arrived here from Salisbury. They say that quite a lot of buildings of a sort have sprung up at the capital, and that there were fully 700 people there when they left. All provisions in the country had been taken over by the Company at a valuation, and people put on rations, on account of Portuguese complications; so this does not look as if the Pungwe route had been reopened. Further, they went on to say, that D and F troops, under Turner and Lendy, had been ordered to take up a position on the Lundi, so as to cover the advance of the Boer trek, by the old hunting-drift over the Crocodile, and up the Nuanetsi through Chibi's country. So our fire-eating C.O. will be in reserve.

Enough of this for a spell, and to give you a fair idea of the moral nausea pervading the air, I will give you an instance. Grey, who has borne all the heat and burden of the day, and has had his nose doubly disjointed by Carrington and Willoughby, when he left Macloutsie, in order to save time, brought two telegrams that were for Tye, but on his arrival here they were nowhere to be found. A week after a despatch rider brought them in from the drifts, and they turned out to be from Harris, and to a certain extent very important. But this is not all.

On the 19th Bodilly returned from the drifts, and left in the post-cart for Macloutsie, *en route* for Mafeking, to buy horses. He, it appears, should have started over a fortnight ago, as the matter is urgent ; but it transpired that Grey had been carrying the telegram containing Carrington's order in his pocket ever since the 1st instant.

This time, to quote correctly, "It is magnificent, but it is not war." Fortunate for us that no great emergency exists. Truly the atmosphere of this country, moral and physical, has much to answer for—has it not?

Death is never a pleasant topic, and the taste that some people have for discussing it, and in frequenting graveyards, although wholesome if not over-indulged in, is to my mind a trifle morbid and gruesome. Still there are times when it has to be done, and once more I have to record the deaths of one of our troopers and two civilians.

On the 5th the up-country mails came in, in a Scotch cart, and with them were Capper, Bruce, and Riley, all down with fever. The other two soon got better and recovered, but the latter, who was very bad on his arrival, grew steadily worse, and in spite of every attention on the part of Goody, and of devotion on the part of the sisters, he rapidly grew worse, falling into a state of coma, from which he never rallied. He died at 5.30 p.m. on the 8th. Riley—you will remember I mentioned him to you in a previous letter as being an ex-officer of the Bays—was a victim to exposure and want of system, and not having an iron constitution he succumbed. One curious fact remains to be told. There seemed a great doubt as to his religion, which, owing to his insensibility, he could not elucidate ; and though I made every enquiry, I could not determine. However, to allay the anxiety of Father Prestige and the Sisters, I told them that judging from his name the probabilities were in favour of his being a Catholic ; so the former, on my assurance, administered the rites of Holy Church to the dying man, and buried him, on the day following his death, according to the Romish sacrament. During the ceremony a few drops of rain fell, as if out of pure sympathy, and in the silence of a deep sorrow the other elements remained mute.

On the following day a civilian came to me at 8.30 a.m., and reported the death of his comrade, Craven. These two men arrived here a few days ago, evidently in very poor circumstances, having walked all the way from Johannesburg, and they have been sleeping on the veldt, not far from the fort, in

a rude shelter that they have extemporised, which does little more than shade them from the sun. Craven has, it appears, been suffering from fever, but last night was well enough to have supper as late as 9 o'clock at Campbell's restaurant, for the indefatigable Caledonian has, I forgot to tell you, followed our fortunes to Tuli. In the morning, when Smith got up, he at first thought that his comrade was asleep, but, noticing how still he lay, on removing the blanket he found him dead. Rather gruesome, waking up to find a man, who has been your travelling companion for months together and over hundreds of miles of road, pass, unknown to you, during the stillness of night, from vitality to stagnation. So it was no wonder that poor Smith looked cut up and down in his luck.

I sent Goody to examine the corpse, and he was quite satisfied that death had resulted from natural failure of the heart's action, brought on by weakness from exposure and undue nourishment.

Campbell, who is a genuinely good-hearted fellow, knowing how hard up Smith is, had a coffin made at his own expense, while Father Prestige read the service over him, and Campbell, along with eight other civilian residents of Tuli and myself, attended.

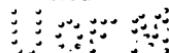
But the most gruesome part of it all is, that six days afterwards we were doing the same office for Smith, who died on the 15th, after thirty epileptic fits.

Poor fellows! Who they were, or where they came from, God only knows, for they have left no clue or trace behind them, and their effects are practically *nihil*. Alone and uncared for, what a cold, comfortless departure theirs has been; but if rest is anywhere to be found, they have it now in the sleep of death, and during the passage to another more restful existence. An improvement, to say the least of it, in comparison to a footsore tramp on want and starvation. Better so, without a doubt, for

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail!"

and I am not sorry to change the subject.

Mr. and Mrs. Bent, whom we had been expecting, arrived here on the 5th, leaving for Victoria after a few days' rest. They were accompanied by Mr. Swan, tall, raw-boned, and Scotch, whose function is to gaze at stars, and make observations, while Mr. Bent, whose speciality is archæology, is to delve and probe among the ruins at Zimbabwe, assisted



by Mrs. Bent, in order to trace its history and origin, if possible.

The fact that the Company is providing the sinews of war speaks well for the liberality of its directors' views, in a twofold sense, although there are some folk unkind enough to say that they have an ulterior object concealed behind the apparent mask of liberality, in attracting attention to the country—a cheap form of advertisement, in fact. But, even supposing it is, what of it? Is it not human nature after all?

We had the Bents and Swan to dinner and lunch, and some of us have tea'd with them in return. On the first night of their arrival, they happened to be dining with us, and the Prince, who is our mess president—a very excellent one, too, as regards our creature comforts, which he studies, along with economy, to a nicety—was sitting at the head of the table, holding forth in his usual blatant style. No subject, I must tell you, comes amiss to him; and we had not been five minutes at dinner, before he was enlightening Bent on the mystery of the ruins, with second-hand ideas that he had picked up from *Tit-Bits, Answers*, or some such high-class journal. Zimbabwe had been a mining town, while the outlying forts, scattered about the country, had been the work of prospectors—in what century, however, he did not say—but they were white men, who had been eventually driven out by fever, and the ferocity of the Matabele (???) or other black men.

I listened to all this in silent amusement, while Bent took it in with a gravity that was inimitable, as if it was an opinion weighty with the authority of the deepest science, while the Prince, oblivious of his ignorance, and how he was exposing it, rattled away merrily; and though by no means deficient in humour, this was not an attempt on his part to draw the expert, but his usual style of conversation, to which, day by day, week after week, and month succeeding month, I have been a patient listener.

Truly patience is a quality which requires a constancy and continuity of practice to make it perfect enough to qualify as a virtue. Do you not think so, and can you not spare me a small shred of sympathy, or even a drop of pity, or must I once more have recourse to my distant, but merciful, star?

Mr. Bent struck me as being a pleasant, yet quiet and thoughtful man, neither bookworm nor pedant, and not much given to talking. But his better half, also agreeable, makes up for it. In fact, she apparently is the outlet for much of his

thought, which she ventilates with voluble fluency. That she is one with him is evident, therefore takes a greater interest in her subject, as is not always natural, and thoroughly understands it, enhances the value of her conversation, which individually, however, is in itself appreciable, for Mrs. Bent is a clever and a well-read woman.

Swan, in spite of his name, is not graceful; but he makes up for this deficiency by a certain solidity and soundness. Although a star-gazer, precise and accurate, as behoves a mathematician, he is a tame cat in the establishment, and makes himself generally useful.

If I had my way, and could only exchange them for the Prince, I should be only too happy; as it is, they have gone far too soon. In spite of the Prince's lucid explanation, I do not think that Mr. Bent has as yet formulated even a theory, though he seems inclined to think that it is possible the Phoenicians had something to do with Zimbabwe. Let us hope, however, that his researches will lead to some definite results, that will throw a light on the present darkness; and in doing so, although wishes are like the morning mists, which melt away into nothingness before the fervid rays of the stern sun of reality, let us wish Mr. and Mrs. Bent the success they deserve, for their pluck alone, in facing present dangers and difficulties, and for the patience they will have to exercise in attempting the accomplishment of an interesting, but herculean task.

Keith-Falconer, who commanded C troop at Victoria, has passed through *en route* to Cape Town. Physically, he looked fairly robust, but his nervous system seems all knocked to pieces and shattered. Never very strong mentally, he was very shaky; but I have no doubt that the hardships they have been exposed to up country, and the awful shaking he had just experienced in a Scotch cart, had a lot to say to it. Personally, he is not the kind of selection I should have made for a rough-and-tumble such as this, though I have no doubt he proved himself a highly efficient A.D.C. to Lady Loch at Cape Town.

He was very rabid over the unheard-of privations and hardships they had been obliged to endure, and he talked at random about the starvation, sickness, and death that had been their lot. Had we taken the picture he drew seriously, which we might have done from the tragic intensity of its depiction, it would have been easy to imagine that he was an

escaped victim of some terrible tragedy ; but knowing what we did, the whole thing resolved itself into a delightful melodrama.

Indeed, a careful analysis of the reports from above (all of which come to me to be compiled into one regimental state, that I forward on to Harris), shews his statement to be only terrible in his exaggeration—the result, I presume, of a highly-strung and fevered imagination, rained upon and shaken to its very centre.

So far there have been only 15 deaths since the commencement, nearly 15 months ago, out of a total of over 700 men. Groceries have been very scarce, but meat and meal have been fairly plentiful, supplemented by rice and pumpkins bought from the natives.

A large percentage of men have been down with fever—at Tuli thirty-four per hundred alone—but the death-rate has been absurdly low, and not even to be compared to the mortality in many parts of Great Britain !

Personally, I have been on many expeditions—two of them including cholera outbreaks, one an epidemic of typhoid, and another of pneumonia—and this one, as regards general health, has been the best. But as this, I believe, is the first that Keith-Falconer has taken part in, it may account for his having made the most of it, for human nature, when self is concerned, is apt to exaggerate.

It is always reasonable, if not logical, to make every allowance, but this is what he has not done, for he has spoken in sweeping condemnation of everything. That they had a very rough time of it, goes almost without saying, and was more or less, if anything more, expected by all hands. That we were not going to have a picnic, everyone, I think, knew. That the Company might have made a better forecast, consequently, more adequate arrangements—especially in the departments of commissariat and transport (the two main branches, the belly and legs of an expedition)—most unprejudiced people will admit.

But for an officer to complain openly is certainly a bad example to set the men, and questionable form, to use the very mildest expression I can think of. And surely it is a service, as it ought to be an individual, principle, purely a matter of good form, for an officer to be silent and endure. It is, however, pleasant to turn and reflect upon the splendid patience and cheerfulness shewn by the men under trying circumstances,

and all the more to their credit, but it is because they are *men* (and what higher praise can I give, than calling them *men*?), that they have taken rough and smooth alike, and made the best of it, the manly and only course to take after all.

The telegraph office was opened at Macloutsie on the 12th inst., and at 3.45. p.m. on the 28th inst. at Tuli, and I think that Mair, Smith, and all the assistants have earned the thanks of the Company and all up here for the energy and zeal they have shewn in their work. And the Company deserve their share of it, too, for Mair tells me that he has received orders to survey on as far as the Nuanetsi, which means, I take it, that the line will be in Victoria before the end of the year, and in Salisbury not many months after, and it bears out my argument that this will always be an alternative road, in spite of the supposed advantages of the Pungwe route, when it is an accomplished fact.

But though, from a political and commercial standpoint, the telegraph is an undoubted gain, it is not always a boon or an unmixed blessing when you have a man like Sitwell in touch with it.

Now Sitwell is a most excellent fellow socially, but as adjutant of the B.B.P. he is a bit of a nuisance, and an awful alarmist. A Staff College man, most proficient in theory, he is sadly deficient in experience, and being quite new to this style of work, he seems to seize on every shave with avidity. But worse than this, in a trice he converts it into a scare, which he passes on to me, and already, though the wires are only a few days old, he has supplied me with two!

Novelty hath charms, but, like a gingerbread, the gilt soon wears off, and I am already living in dread of a daily scare. The first one he sent me was that three impis of Matabele were on the war-path, but, as if that was not alarming enough in itself, he went on to say that they were marching on Tuli. Not knowing my man, and as Khama has always spies and scouts in search of information, I wired to Pilapwie, receiving a reply that three Matabele impis had gone north to the Zambezi, with the intention of making a swoop round and returning by Mashonaland. This made me slightly suspicious of friend Sitwell; but, to cap his first performance, a few days ago I received a second message from him, this time by hand and not by wire. I was sitting in my office the other morning, when a man was ushered in. Rather a low, cunning-looking

ruffian, who announced himself as a transport rider rejoicing in the euphonious name of O'Shocknessy. Handing me a very dirty-looking letter, he apologised for having opened the letter by mistake! It was evident that, smelling a rat, his curiosity had overcome his discretion, but the message being worded in cipher, the shock to his feelings must have proved severe. So the only reply I could make to him was that I hoped he was the wiser for his little mistake, but that he had better be more careful in the future, and he withdrew.

I guessed that the message was in reference to the bearer, but, although Sitwell had outwitted him, had he waited for a day or two, and sent an ordinary message by the wire, he would have gained his object instead of defeating it, for, having no key to the Playfair cipher, one that he had learnt recently at the Staff College, no one in camp could decipher it, so I had to wire and ask him for an explanation. And when the man had gone, I got a translation, which, as I surmised, was to warn me that O'Shocknessy was a dangerous character, but in what way he did not explain. O'Shocknessy certainly had a hang-dog, shifty look, which might have excited suspicion, but how he can be a source of danger to us, except as a Boer emissary to Lobengula, I cannot imagine. And as we have not an iota of evidence against him, we can do nothing except, perhaps, watch his movements.

Deerhurst and Flower arrived here on the 18th. The former brought me a letter from his brother Coventry, of the B.B.P., asking me to do what I could for him, which I have done, and the best thing, so far, has been to dissuade him from enlisting in the Police, as he is hardly what I should call a desirable style of recruit.

The latter, an ex-Scots Guardsman and brother to Cyril Flower, shewed me, among his papers, a rough note scrawled by Harris on a piece of paper to say that Mr. Rhodes had given him a lieutenancy; but, as I have so far received no official instructions about him, I have put him in orders as a sub-lieutenant, much to his disgust.

Rhodes evidently is not a man of his word, for he distinctly stated that promotion was to go in the Corps, and yet this is the second man—Barnett being the first with a captaincy—he has brought in over the heads of all the subalterns. And now we hear that two others, White and Jones, are on their way up.

Burnett, a Colonial, and a very nice fellow, passed through from Salisbury on his way down country. He is not very enthusiastic over the country, and speaks with great caution. He lunched and dined with us, and, among other scraps of information, he told us that Gascoigne had floated a Hotel Company in shares of £25, with a capital of £5000, and that in a few hours every share was taken! He has lost no time evidently, and it speaks well for his activity, and for the speculative character of Salisburyites, does it not? The second in command of the Mafeking-cum-Limpopo command has at length arrived by the Pietersberg coach, and with him a man called Stokes, manager of the Mashonaland Agency, and Jones, of the Artillery. The latter, as we heard, declining a lieutenancy, as he says that Pennefather has promised him a troop, I wired to Harris, and have received a reply through his medium, but, in spite of it, Jones' position still remains an anomaly.

Another line, in conclusion, to say that we have just received news from up country to the effect that Heyman has been attacked by the Portuguese close to Masikessi, and had repulsed them with a loss that is unknown, but supposed to be heavy.

So the fat is in the fire at last, and this evidently was the objective of the regiment and guns mentioned by Bruce in his letter from Masikessi of February 5th, 1891, as having been landed in Beira; and the question now is, What will be the upshot? Shall we be equal to the occasion, seize Beira, and leave our own coast-line, or shall we be satisfied with our victory, and remain on the defensive? On the other hand, what will the Portuguese do? Cave in, and accede to our demands, or send for reinforcements and attack us in force? The former for choice, as I do not think they have much stomach for fighting.

I have received another letter from Bruce, written on the 17th of April from a place called "Umlewani's," in Manica; but he makes no mention of the fight, so has evidently not heard of it, as he is a long way off Heyman, and there is no direct communication between them, and as he gives such a vivid picture of the realities of the life, I quote it in full:

"I often think of you all, and the dear old Troop. We have been waiting in this country for the final settlement; but with the exception of various alarms about the Portuguese advancing to attack, our life is, indeed, dull and lonely. The men are very badly off for clothes, and

what they have bears no resemblance to uniform, while many of them are bootless and going about barefooted.

"Meat is a rarity ; and though there is game in abundance, the grass is so high that it is impossible in most places to see five yards from the path. Tea, coffee, sugar, and bread I have been so long without that I do not miss, and have quite forgotten, the taste of. Our principal article of diet is mealie meal and pumpkin. The meal we get from the natives is made from young mealies, which do not bind ; but as we get sweet potatoes now and then, we manage, by mixing them together, to make a sort of potato-cake or bread with it. I have lived three whole days on nothing but pumpkin-squash—not over-pleasant at any time, but without even salt or pepper absolutely nauseous ; but I am getting on better now, except for meat. Heyman managed to send me, a few days ago, a little Boer meal, which I serve every fourth day at one pound per man ; so we do manage to get a little bread by mixing it with the Kaffir meal.

"Umtali, where Heyman and Ffienes are, is about 190 miles from Fort Salisbury, and I am about 130 miles from him, cutting a road to the Buse river—or, rather, to the nearest navigable part of it. I hope to be there in a week or so. Of course, in the event of the Portuguese moving forward from Sarmento, I am cut off ; but as I have about a thousand natives that the chiefs have placed at my disposal, I am all right.

"We have had a lot of fever, but very few deaths, considering. Block, of A Troop, died at Masikessi on the 24th January. After I left, only two men remained behind there—Matthews and Glover. They were both down with fever, and it appears, when the former died, the native servants cleared off, as they always do when a white man dies here. Owing to the rivers being up, it was five days before any of the men could get from Umtali to bury him. You can well imagine the state the body was in on their arrival—so bad, indeed, that with great difficulty a rope was made fast to his legs, and he was then dragged to his grave. Glover was all the time in the same room, and very nearly insane—and no wonder !

"Friend, of A Troop, died here, and that is all, with the exception that one of my natives was taken from underneath the waggon by a tiger ; and Morier, who was with me a short time ago, in returning, lost a boy by a crocodile.

"Morier is still on the police books, but is virtually a civilian, and is used as an interpreter and assistant to MacGlashen, who, at present, is doing the work of Registrar, or Claim Inspector. I do not know anything about our claims except that they are all pegged out, and that there is a call of £20.

"For a long time we have been under the impression that Colonel Pennefather died at Tuli on the 27th of January last.

"This was supposed to have been called out across the Lundi, or some other river, by a post-rider, and it was only the day before yesterday that I heard the report was false.

"I have a lot of writing to get off by this mail, so I must close now. Remember me kindly to Harford, Hicks-Beach—who I see is with you—and to Nesbitt. I was very sorry to hear of the death of his son, poor fellow ! With best wishes to yourself and the Troop,

"I remain, yours very sincerely,
(Signed) "F. W. BRUCE."

CHAPTER XXIX.

TULI.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOER TREK. ADDITION AND MULTIPLICATION OF WHEELS.

From 1st to 10th June, 1891.

JUNE 2nd.—As the Boer trek is still engrossing our attention, I will begin this contribution with a description of its development since last I wrote.

Grey came in from Masebi's Drift yesterday, and says that there are a large number of Boers at the second and third outspans from the main drift on the Crocodile, but he has no idea of their numbers. This, of course, looks as if something was meant, and proves the existence of a scheme of some sort, for some of the Cape papers to hand by last mail publish an open letter from a Mr. Du Toit advising the trekkers, in clear, concise, and explicit language, to abstain from crossing the Crocodile into British territory.

Besides this, Sir Henry Loch has issued a proclamation calling attention to the fact that any attempt by the Boers to invade British territory will be construed as a hostile act against the British Government, and dealt with accordingly; and Kruger, the President of the Transvaal, has followed suit by warning his subjects to desist under pains and penalties, and declaring any such act to be illegal.

So there is something in the trek after all, but that is the most one can say for it—a mere trek of a few discontented men, who have been put up to coming by Messrs. Adendorff and Barend Voster, a pair of wily agitators, who want to annoy and disconcert Rhodes. And their excuse of forming a new republic in a country that they maintain they have quite as good a right to as we, is, I imagine, but a flimsy pretext to cover their real intention of levying blackmail.

It is clear, therefore, that the much-talked-of projected invasion has fallen through, or, to be more accurate, has

never existed, though I can quite believe that, had less active and vigorous men than Sir Henry Loch and Rhodes been at the head of affairs, it would have been attempted on some organised basis and preconcerted plan of action.

Willoughby, that fidget on wheels, although he has been here only six days, has done simply wonders, first of all in trying to make our fort impregnable, having quite lost sight of the main fact, that its position against artillery, and even accurate rifle fire such as the Boers could bring against it, is absolutely untenable.

And now he is down at the drifts drawing up plans and devising deadly means to meet the Boers with. Poor misguided wretches, I have a fellow-feeling for them. To be deluded and let into a trap on one side of the Crocodile, while Willoughby is waiting on the other to give them a hot reception, is what I call cruel—stuck up on both horns of a dilemma, or falling from a hot frying-pan into a still hotter fire. Hard lines with a vengeance, though I have no doubt they deserve it richly. The most amusing part of his expansive scheme has been to send one of my men, disguised as a civilian, across the Crocodile as a spy, with most elaborate instructions to send him daily budgets, but how he does not say—to be left to chance, as usual, I ween.

As I told you on a former occasion, however, there is no knowing in this country what an hour may produce; and this evening, at 6 o'clock, Goold Adams arrived to take over command from Willoughby, whose nasal organ is now also out of joint, so my well-meaning sympathy for the Boers has been quite thrown away.

This makes the ninth commanding officer I have lately had, still, however, leaving me six to go on with, namely, Rhodes, Harris, Carrington, Goold Adams, Willoughby, and Pennefather; while recently Tye has been appointed as my military adviser, for the princely one has shewn me a telegram from Rhodes informing me that as Tye is an officer of great experience, it would be politic of me to seek his advice.

Addition and multiplication of wheels you see, and, as you can imagine, it requires much tact to steer between them, but the Prince is wise in his generation, and keeps his advice to himself until it is wanted. Goold Adams, however, seems a nice, sensible sort of fellow, and he tells me that Willoughby is to go up to Manica, to be put out of the way, because, when he passed through Pretoria, he spoke unadvisedly to Kruger on the subject of the trek.

Either he had authority from Rhodes, or was presuming too much on the strength of his relationship with him and Jameson. The former, I should think, is out of the question ; the latter, which is the true assumption, I presume, is a fair specimen of his tact and discrimination, and a criterion of his "wide capacity." That he is a mixture of nonchalance, presumption, and speculation is evident, and that he may have a good head for the latter, as I am informed he has, I will allow ; but to have left him down at the drifts, in contact with any Boers, would have been as bad as throwing a firebrand into the veldt at the end of the dry season.

I have said all along that not a shot will be fired if the Boers are handled with tact and discrimination, and I think, if my first impressions are correct, Goold Adams is the right man in the right place, either for diplomacy, or, if necessary, for a row.

All the greatest authorities on strategy and tactics, dead and living, are agreed that the attack has a decided superiority over the defence, for one strong reason alone, that it can take the initiative when and where and how it likes, *i.e.* strike a blow in a place known only to itself ; and they one and all have come to a like conclusion, that the defence of a long and endless river line (such as the Limpopo is, passable in the winter in hundreds of places) is one of the most difficult operations of war, for it is impossible to defend all the drifts, as your force is only split up into numerous detachments, and consequently weakened, whereas the attack can remain concentrated, and cross wherever they choose.

I put this to Goold Adams, and he was of my opinion, but says the Governor desires that there should be a small party at each drift. If the Boers really meant business, which I do not think for a minute they do, five hundred of them, well commanded, could undoubtedly crush us up in detail at the drifts. We have seventy men and two Maxims down there already, and sixty to seventy more men are going to reinforce these in a day or two. These seventy men are guarding three drifts, and, on being reinforced, at least two more drifts are to be guarded.

Concentration applies even more strongly to a small weak force, such as ours is, without any proper reserve, than it does to a big one. For if our 140 men and two guns were concentrated in a central and well-chosen position, being obliged to patrol and watch the remaining drifts, we might make a stand against 500 Boers ; but fribbled away as they are

in driblets, the odds are 1000 to one in favour of total annihilation.

To make matters worse, we have sixteen horses only among a total of 140 men, while it is certain that every Boer would be well mounted. Even out of the sixteen horses we have, half of them are broken-down old crocks that would not stand one day's hard work.

A great deal of fuss has in a way been made over this Boer trek, but only half measures have been taken, after all, in a very half-hearted sort of way, which either shews that nothing serious could have ever been contemplated, or gross and culpable negligence on the part of the authorities. But with a governor like Sir Henry the latter inference is, I should say, out of the question. If business is really meant, we ought to have a reserve here of at least 200 men, and every man, both here and at the drifts, should be mounted. Why the Governor, with all due deference to him in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, should interfere in the arrangements of military details at a distance of about 800 miles from the scene of operations, I must confess I fail to see. Surely this could be done better by the Commander on the spot.

This morning I received information that a Boer deputation of eight men, said to be on their way to Buluwayo to stir up Lobengula against the Company, had arrived at the Lower Drift. I rode down with Sergeant Fitzgerald to interview them, and found three Englishmen among the party, who tell me that they want to ride transport to Salisbury. As there is no reason to disbelieve their statement I have allowed them to proceed. The fact is, we have Boers on the brain at the present time, which accounts for our tracing their fingers to every existing mud-pie.

Jameson arrived the day before yesterday (3rd) by the Peitersburg coach, and Harris turned up *via* Macloutsie this evening, Grey returning there; while Crichton Browne and twenty-eight men of the B.B.P. marched in here to do duty, and Flowers with a detachment of sixty-four men and five waggons crossed the river this afternoon *en route* to the drifts. Has a wedge more than one thin edge, can you tell me? Because if it has, this is certainly one of them.

Jameson, having come through the Transvaal, ought to be in a position to give us the latest news, but he either knows too much or nothing at all, for he is very reticent about it.

And another ex-officer has passed through here, engrossed

in the tally-ho and yoicks of the golden chase, Beaumont, of the 5th Dragoon Guards, who were quartered in Dundalk when we were at Newry ; while, as a chronicle of our movements, Goold Adams and Capper have gone down to the drifts.

I have had a most unpleasant duty to perform, which Jameson, I consider, should have done himself, and I must say I do not like the irregular and slipshod system that the leading officials of the Company work on ; in fact, there is a want of system about it which is painful. This morning Jameson sent for and requested me to inform Harford that he is to leave the Corps, and, although he gave me his reasons for getting rid of him, he asked me not to mention them, but to say that it was on reduction. Although in other ways he is behaving liberally towards him, there is something so mean and petty about it all, and, as Harford's C.O., I have had to break the news to him. Poor fellow, I am very sorry for him, as, with all his defects, he is plucky, willing, and thoroughly keen at heart, and his one idea is soldiering. So you can imagine how cut up he is.

But why could not Jameson do his own dirty work, and tell the boy straight that he does not want him any longer because of his unsuitability ?

We hear that a break has occurred in the telegraph line between Palapwie and Palla, but it is only temporary, and will soon be repaired.

I think I have already told you of the field-rats that infest us here. They are little larger than a good-sized, well-fed mouse, of a brownish-grey colour ; but, out of all proportion to their size, they are terribly destructive, and the damage they do in our gardens and in our huts is appalling ; in fact, it is not safe to leave anything out at night, for nothing comes amiss to them, tweed, cloth, and felt being a mere delicacy, while rifle bullets seem to be quite a rare bit.

Whether they eat the cloth, or take it away to line their nests and make them soft and comfortable, I cannot tell, though I rather incline to the former, as there is little for them to eat on the hill. But whether they gnaw the bullets to sharpen their teeth, or whet the edge of a ravenous appetite, I am at a loss to say. Certain it is, however, that hundreds of cartridges have been so bitten. The greasy paper in the old Martini-Henry cartridge is explainable, but to attack the "solid drawn" is beyond me.

The other day I had my pet smasher-hat ventilated so completely that I have had to discard it altogether, and last night eight large biscuits I left on my table had all of them disappeared when I got up this morning; for my hut is overrun with the little plagues, who are either so tame or so irrepressible that they even take a look round by day to see what they can pick up. Poisoning them has absolutely no effect, for they increase to an extent that is even more appalling than the rabbit, and if they are as bad as this in Mashonaland, as a scourge to the farmer they will be a very serious consideration to reckon with.

While on this topic, among other things, the common or garden fly is another decidedly destructive pest, and much of our produce has been spoiled by them, especially the tomatoes, which, so far, we have found grow better here than anything else; for while the lettuce has only been fair, and the potatoes indifferent, the tomatoes have really been splendid.

From further information received by last mail, we learn that a Portuguese officer was killed and one or two more were wounded in trying to make their men advance to the attack on Heyman's position. The report speaks well of the officers, who behaved with much gallantry, but states that the soldiers, most of whom were natives, had almost to be driven to the slaughter, while our men, only forty in number, ensconced behind a rough earthwork, which had been thrown up hastily, slated them as they came on, Heyman working the seven-pounder with much coolness and effect.

But no further advance on our part has been made, and we do not hear of any warlike preparations by the Portuguese, so the affair remains for the present *in statu quo*, and will, I suppose, end in the usual arbitration, and in the Portuguese withdrawing all opposition by declaring the Pungwe route open. What brought on the collision we have not heard, but ~~it~~ is, I imagine, an outcome of the recent friction, commencing with Gouveia and D'Andrade's capture, and culminating in the Willoughby incident.

But why have we not gone on? Want of initiative on the part of Colquhoun, I ween. More's the pity! And oh, the pity of it, and the lost chance, friend Cecil!

CHAPTER XXX.

TULI.

DOCTOR JAMESON.

From 11th to 20th June, 1891.

THIS is going to be almost entirely a Jamesonian effort, or, to make it clearer to you, all about Jameson, who has been here some time now, and whom I have, of course, seen a great deal of, both socially and officially.

For the first few days he wrapped himself up in a cloak of impenetrability, and retired into a shell of reserve manufactured, as I imagine, for the occasion, and he seemed to me to be feeling his way among us with characteristic caution, typical not only of his nationality, but of his individuality, which is, to a certainty, cast in the plastic mould of diplomacy. These are only my deductions: but, of course, I may be wrong; and it may be that he had other and weightier reasons for keeping to himself, among others, a deliberation of certain questions affecting administration, and requiring immediate attention, if not settlement. That it may have had something to do with affairs in Manica, but can have had little or no reference to this overdone Boer business, is possible; still, there is no knowing.

However, in a dry, quiet way, peculiarly his own, and no one else's, he has occasionally had recourse to the decidedly strong vein of humour that runs through him, and which invariably finds a vent in Harris. Indeed, it is very amusing to watch the winged shafts of his playfully-pointed wit threading their silken course softly and silently into the natural butt opposite, whose passive receptivity in taking them without a wince can only be accounted for by the fact of an armour of hide pachydermatous, or, maybe, because of the racial instinct strong within him, it suits his purpose to play a waiting game.

There is one point that I cannot quite understand about Jameson, and that is his interference in military and police detail. In Harris, needless to say, it is nothing but bumptiousness and ignorance. In Rhodes it is disdainful contempt, abhorrence of small things, and an imperious will that can

brook no control; but with Jameson, whose professional education and practice have been accustomed to a certain discipline, or to a training of an unwritten etiquette quite as rigorous as discipline, it ought to be different.

As he has interfered, and given orders direct, instead of through me, I have just been to remonstrate with him. He was very nice and sensible when I spoke to him, and seemed to recognise his mistake; and I must say, for him, that assumption of power has nothing to do with it, for his fund of common sense is too large, and his insight into character is too keen, while his way of looking at things in general, or any point in particular, is precise, matter-of-fact, and practical.

And yet I cannot attribute it to pure forgetfulness, for he is much too clear-headed, and has too strong a memory, I should think. His opinion of soldiers would, in itself, upset this theory. Overcharged with official routine, which they bow down to and worship as a demi-god, with a fervour of blind adoration, at the same time that they shirk the other demi-god, Responsibility, with the veneration of holy horror, an officer, according to Jameson, is a machine evolved out of an amalgamation of red-tape and sealing-wax. For though these are not his words, they are, I feel sure, his sentiments; and I admitted to him that, as a general definition, it was true enough, but that many exceptions existed.

Then I pointed out to him the simple truism, that *red-tape* is *one* thing, and *discipline* *another*. That no commander—and the higher the rank the less likelihood—would ever dream of issuing an order regarding some mere detail of interior economy, direct to the men of a corps, but that he would issue it in the recognised way through the usual, and therefore proper, channel, the ignoring of which is subversive of, and striking at, the root of all discipline; and that it is this highly essential moral force, well ruled and regulated, which is the line of demarcation between a mob and a body of soldiers, and that it, and it alone, can transform the former into the latter, while even a certain amount of the much-despised red-tape, judiciously applied, is also an absolute necessity.

Still he is not convinced, and either he "cannot" or "will not" discriminate between the two. "Will not," I should say as much more likely, and between ourselves I am inclined to think that, like his model and magnet, Jameson does not believe in excessive formality, but in attaining an object by the nearest and quickest method; and it would

take very little to induce either Rhodes or himself, should the occasion present itself, or the emergency arise, to ride roughshod over forms or amenities and rules or regulations. At least, this is the only way I can account for it. No doubt, in the making of a new country, a rough-and-ready manner is the surest way of overcoming difficulties, but as often as not it defeats its own object, for a forced growth, though palatable and acceptable, is, to say the least of it, unnatural and artificial, and has neither the stamina nor the excellence of Nature's own outcome. And, as a man with the instincts of a soldier, I maintain that discipline, as an essential, is most certainly indispensable.

Since writing this, Jones, Harford, and Willoughby have left for Salisbury, *en route* to Manica, and our mess has been reduced to six, including Jameson and Harris. This has given me much more opportunity of talking to the former, and the more I talk to him the more interesting he becomes, both socially and as a study of human character. Yet I find him hard to associate in my mind as the governor of a large country, although as an exceedingly capable administrator of a new colony, he is certainly the right man in the right place. There is about him an ease and freedom, a *hail-fellow-well-met* manner, a want of refinement and dignity, that are not compatible with the position and personality of an Imperial governor, but which will readily tend to popularity, and qualify him all the more for his present post as a representative of a politico-commercial concern. At dinner this evening Jameson quite came out of his shell, and the "*open sesame*" that threw back the entrance to his maw of thought were the magic words "*Parnell*" and "*Home Rule*"; and they drew him out as effectually as the screw of domestic economy does a cork.

I happened to mention O'Brien's book *When we were Boys*, the perusal of which had changed my opinion of the writer considerably—who had brought himself into ridicule through the breeches and other incidents—because it made me feel that he was sincere in his convictions, had the welfare of his country thoroughly at heart, and was no mere vulgar agitator, as was popularly supposed; while the feeling that O'Brien believed implicitly in what he had written, had increased my respect for him as a man.

Jameson immediately and quite eagerly asked me to lend him the book to read, and, upon my promising to do so, he continued that O'Brien, as second in command of one of the

greatest movements of the day, or century, for the matter of that, and apart from any individual or other consideration, must be a man with something in him. From this point we drifted into the Home Rule question, and then on to its leader, and it was quite evident, from the way in which he argued, that his sympathies were entirely with them. And, in reply to a question put to him point-blank, if he was a Home Ruler, he said, "I am not an Irishman, and have never been in Ireland except once, when I landed for a few hours at Queenstown, on my return from New York; but I am a Home Ruler, and believe in Parnell as one of the cleverest and greatest men of the day.

"You ask me why I am a Home Ruler, not being an Irishman, and I say because Home Rule is bound to come, and I wish to be in with the majority." But though he would not admit that there was any other reason behind this, I am quite convinced there is, and the answer was characteristic of the cautious prudence of the man; for Jameson has too much individuality and force of character ever to be carried away by a majority, or even a minority, against his own convictions; but if he is to be swayed at all by one man's will, that man is Rhodes—only him, and no other.

"Rhodes is a keen Home Ruler, of course," he answered to an interrogation of mine, "and he looks on Parnell as one of the most wonderful men of the century—the uncrowned king, without a doubt, until his recent fall—who by sheer genius and force of will consolidated a disrupted party into a political unit, which held and controlled the balance of power between the Conservatives and Liberals, and I am with him entirely.

"'For fifteen years,' as Parnell said to us, 'I have been fighting the priests, and had got them into some order, and now they have turned against me on the platform of morality; but I knew all along it was coming.'

"The real state of the case is this, though I dare say some of you already know it"; and Jameson, now quite wound up, went on to explain.

"Parnell wrote to Gladstone, asking him what policy he intended carrying out towards Home Rule and Ireland, and whether he meant to adhere to the programme he had previously promised. Gladstone shelved the letter for a week, and in the meantime had received a letter from some leading Nonconformist parson, informing him that the whole Nonconformist section would secede from him, if he still continued

to throw in his lot with Parnell. Then it was that Gladstone made use of the O'Shea scandal as a handle to back out of a difficulty, and a howl of so-called righteous indignation swept through the ranks of the great Gladstonian party, and split it up into two or more factions—a large number, under Hartington and Chamberlain, joining the Conservative ranks ; while in the Irish party, Justin MacCarthy, backed up by considerably more than half the Nationalists, and all the priests in a body, turned against Parnell. But why morals or religion should have anything to say to the question I fail to see."

"The reason why religion should affect politics in the existing condition of things is surely palpable and allowable?" I queried.

"Perhaps so," he answered doubtfully ; "but hardly excusable, though it is bound to remain so, I suppose, until we are educated by science up to a more intellectual standard. But morals ought on no account to be considered. For what difference can it make in a man, as a legislator, what his morals are, if he has genius and intellect, and can use them? What matter how low and perverse a man's views are, according to accepted notions, like ——" (mentioning a well-known name), "for instance, it is downright folly and absurd idiocy to prevent him from devoting his intellect, which in all other points except vice may be splendid, in the public interests of his country.

"What, after all, are morality and vice? The former only what we choose to make it, by an unwritten code that we delineate as moral, backed up by social laws and regulations. While judged by this highly evanescent and apocryphal moral standard, vice is an infringement of these selfsame codes and laws that we ourselves have made for our convenience, and as a purely social safeguard.

"This, in a private sense, is right enough as far as it goes ; but, in a public sense, vice is a thing apart, and in no way interferes with a man's capacity to improve or benefit others by his intelligence."

"But granting, for sake of argument, that morals are merely what we have made by legislation, and have nothing whatever to do with an innate sense of perception between right and wrong, do you think that a man, no matter what his ability, is capable of improving others, if he himself has a low moral appetite?"

"Decidedly I do, because I cannot see how, in any way, morals can affect a man's intellect, and so long as he keeps his immoralities to himself, I don't see how they can affect anyone else. The actual vice is nothing. It is the being found out that makes the crime." And he went on enlarging on morals in connection with politics with a fervour that considerably surprised me, and to an extreme that somewhat opened my eyes. And of course, taken from a purely practical and material starting-point, without reference to any side issues, either realistic or sentimental, there is something in his argument; but judged as it ought to be, in the full glare of fact and reality, and, therefore, on principle—a thing we fortunately cannot dispense with—it will not hold water for a moment.

This morning I got a telegram from Carrington to say that he was leaving Mafeking for Macloutsie on a tour of inspection, and that it was possible he would come on here. It is evident that he expects no fighting with the Boers, or he would have been on the spot by now, as he is, from all accounts, one of the last men to miss the chance of a fight.

I happened casually to mention to Jameson that there was a possibility of Carrington coming up here to inspect, when he smiled quietly, and said, "Yes, a good excuse to meet Lord Randolph, and have a shoot and a free drink." Decidedly unkind and uncalled-for—do you not think so?—even were it true, and a remark that would have been better left unsaid. Hardly up to the form of a governor, and yet natural enough, even to the large minds of African big-wigs! I am not sure whether I have previously mentioned to you the fact that shortly after my arrival at Macloutsie, quite a year ago now, I wrote a letter to Harris asking for civil employment in a magisterial capacity, and enclosing my record of service and testimonials in support of it. To this he sent me quite a fulsome reply, saying that he had shewn my papers to Mr. Rhodes, who was much pleased with their excellence, and promising me one of the first civil appointments in the country. Ever since the Weil incident, however, Harris, true to the traditions of his race, has had his knife into me on every occasion; but thinking, as Jameson and he were on the spot, I would take the opportunity of speaking to the former, so as to clinch the matter one way or the other, I have attempted to approach him on the subject, but each time he has foiled me, managing very cleverly to put me off from day to day.

This morning, however, at the last moment (for he and Harris

have gone, the former to the drifts, the latter to Salisbury), Jameson said he wanted to speak to me. Beating about the bush, as if to give him time to collect certain points, he broke the ice by informing me that he had heard me say how full of work my hands were, but that he would be able to relieve me of a good deal—all the license and civil work, for instance—which was now to be performed by Tye, who had been appointed magistrate here by the Governor. This was so extremely palpable that I could not help pointing it out to Jameson, who, after much humming and hawing, and more philandering about the bush, admitted, as I had guessed, that Sir Henry had only confirmed the appointment, which had been recommended by the Company.

Then I told him that it was extremely hard on me, after having done all the work, and that I had never complained of too much work, but, on the contrary, liked it.

"I know you have not complained," replied Jameson; "but I thought that you had quite enough to do looking after 240 men. Besides, the fact of your being a 'combative' officer is against your being a magistrate, and Heyman has simply been appointed in Manica because he is the only officer there."

Curiously weak argument, it struck me, for, situated as we are in an unformed country, the "combative" officer (as he calls it) is the very man to act as magistrate—certainly, in preference to a man who holds, as Tye does, the position of senior commissariat officer as well as officer in charge of postal and telegraph departments, and having, in these capacities, control of a large expenditure; besides the fact that, notwithstanding the anomaly of my position, the working of affairs up to the present has been eminently satisfactory. But it is easy to see which way the cat jumps, and it is evident that Tye, assisted by his crony, has worked all he knew to get this appointment, as it leaves him unhampered and unfettered, and practically gives him all the power he requires for the accomplishment of his cherished object. What that is I cannot say, but I can think, and if Jameson only suspected as much as I do, he would, I believe, be honestly sorry for the selection he has made.

Jameson then went on to say that he had considered my request for a civil appointment, and would remember it, but there were none at present to give away.

To this I answered that I would not on any consideration stay in the police, and certainly not with Pennefather, because

I felt that I could not serve with justice either to the Company or myself, but that I could do so in a civil capacity, and that should I obtain such, it was my intention to settle in Mashonaland.

He was very nice over it all, and after one or two assurances that he would not forget me, we parted. But the estimate I had previously formed, of his being a man of his word, exists no longer, and in its place distrust has grown, and of his ultra-level-headedness also I am slightly dubious. As my keen-sighted old friend, Bulwer Lytton, says, "There is no policy like politeness, and a good manner is the best thing in the world either to get one a good name, or to supply the want of it."

Not that Jameson's manner is good, in the sense of a high polish, but in every other way, politeness and suavity especially, it is extremely so, and he never loses a chance of using it, if he can help it.

And, after all, politeness, like civility, is cheap ; in fact it is civility, with a thin and transparent veneer poured over it, and under cover of which a multitude of peccadilloes can be virtuously concealed, while promises, like pie-crust, are flimsy and easily forgotten.

First of all, this putting off of the evil day, and waiting until the very last moment before telling me of Tye's appointment, so as to hamper my movements, and prevent my taking any action in the matter, is what I do not like.

Secondly, the manifest injustice of the thing, and, thirdly, the palpable prevarication, so easily seen through.

In fact the whole thing, but especially the palpable prevarication, which he tried so awkwardly to conceal under the shelter of a false diplomacy, has disgusted me tremendously, and in my estimation—small, no doubt, to him, but of great consequence to myself—he has decidedly fallen.

Not altogether because of my treatment, though 'I am naturally hurt at the slight put upon me, because I have taken a more accurate measure of the man they have selected, than Rhodes and Jameson, who, with all their undoubted cleverness, have been hoodwinked and bluffed all round ; but I am most certainly disappointed, because while I have their interests at heart, Tye has his own, and only his own, and yet they cannot, or will not, see it. Cannot in their case, because he plays the game of brag infinitely better than they can, will not in Harris', because there are none so blind as those who won't see.

Another reason for my disgust is, on account of the paltriness of the manner in which Jameson conveyed the information, and it galls me to think that either he must take me for a gullible and egregious ass, in fact, or one of the same kidney as himself. Now if Tye or Harris had spoken to me in the same way, I should have expected and thought no more about it, but I gave Jameson credit for more manliness and greater powers of diplomacy.

Diplomacy, of course, is all very well in its way, and it is very necessary at times to prevaricate and lie ; without these, in fact, it would not be diplomacy. But in my case there was no need whatever for it, and either Jameson must be a poor reader or judge of character, or mine must be very much more intricate than I, for one, know it to be !

In any case, in matters of this kind give me the straightforward, plain, blunt truth in preference to the crooked and tortuous course of falsehood. It is the better diplomacy. And if they do not want me let them say so, and I will pack my traps and go. Indeed, if it was not for the Boer bugbear I would go now, though it suits my purpose better to slide on a little longer ; and I have told Jameson that I wish to resign when it is over.

Jameson and Harris left at 12.30 p.m.—the former for the Drifts in a Cape cart, the latter on a horse to overtake his waggon, which is waiting for him at Ipagee ! It was distinctly comical seeing him mount—or, rather, trying to—and if my hand were only half so artistic as my eye, I believe I could have easily rivalled the inimitable Leech in his sketches of Mr. Briggs and his sporting tours. Fastened to his saddle, fore, aft, and all round, were blankets, coats, towels, canteens, flasks, and all manner of things in rolls and bundles, over which our African Don Quixote, who is short and stout, made frantic endeavours to throw his right leg, but in vain, and in the end he was literally hoisted like a clumsy petard, and lowered into position. And with his paraphernalia all around him he will prove a match for any Matabele impi, however big and ferocious. How he got out of it—the paraphernalia, I mean—I am curious to know.

Talking of our old friend, the Matabele question, how quickly and how quietly it has died a natural death !—unnatural, I should rather say, or, to be still more accurate, not death, but temporary relegation to a back seat, eventually to take the stalls, or even the boards, by storm.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TULI.

RECRUITS ARRIVE AND LOCUSTS SWARM—NO ACCOUNTING
FOR HUMAN VAGARIES.

From 21st to 30th June, 1891.

THE Jamesonian effort left me no time to mention one or two facts which occurred last month, and that are worth recording. On the 15th June, White, an Honourable, a captain in the 7th Fusiliers, arrived here with a party of recruits. He has accepted a lieutenancy in this corps—curious anomaly, to say the least of it; but there is no accounting for human vagaries any more than we can for transmutation or life itself. He is, however, an exceedingly nice fellow, very smart, and useful into the bargain, so is a decided acquisition to us.

I cannot altogether say the same for the recruits, although individually they are all nice young fellows, and smart enough, because they are all, with one exception, out from England. One of them is a soft-looking, red-headed Honourable, and another is the son of Sir Julius Voegel, with a keen, hawk-like proboscis, while a third has the name and appearance of rather a celebrated actor. Most of them, in fact, are gentlemen at large, and have never had a profession of any kind. The one brilliant exception is a smart youngster, by name Tanner, who has been four years on a New Zealand sheep-farm as a station cadet. He is a splendid horseman, has his wits about him, and is the pick of the bunch decidedly. Speaks well for New Zealand, does it not?

On the same day that the recruits arrived, a cloud of locusts passed over the camp, coming from the south and going north. Extending in breadth for many miles, it first became visible at midday, disappearing only with the sun, and so thick as to darken the air and throw quite a gloom over our surroundings. Every now and then the cloud grew very thick, visibly deepening the gloom, and the noise made with their wings by these

tiny insects seemed to me like the sound of rushing waters. We have had one or two flights since then, but they have been puny in comparison.

Nicholson also arrived on this eventful day. I shewed him the horses he had sent us, on which he grew very savage, and told Harris, who was there, that it was a most thankless job, buying horses for the Chartered Company.

And now I will resume where I left off in my last. Pennefather and Graham arrived here to-day (19th) without any warning. The latter tells me that the former is most anxious to see Jameson, as he is thinking of retiring on account of the way in which the Company have been treating him by bringing in Barnett, Flowers, and White. He also went on to say that when they were on their way down, they met Willoughby on his way up to Manica. Pennefather stopped and gave him orders not to go beyond Victoria, and as Willoughby rode away, he shouted after him, "If you go, I will put you under arrest"; adding, "I have left orders with Heyman that he is on no account to take orders from you."

Needless for me to criticise! Further, a day or two after, when they met Harris at Umzingwan, Pennefather had a fearful row with him, and now he is panting to go for Jameson.

This is a fair sample of the mode things are going on up here.

As I have already stated, Pennefather, had he anything in him, would have resigned ere now, and it is a curious coincidence that White heard, on the road up, that he was going to retire and be succeeded by Goold Adams. It looks very much as if they were trying to force his hand. My own impression is that Willoughby has been playing a deep game for the command; but should he get it, nearly all the officers would resign in a body.

Speaking of Colquhoun and Jameson, Graham informs me that, in the first instance, they were great friends, but afterwards, on their way down to Manica, Jameson tried to take the administration of affairs into his own hands, and so they fell out.

Willoughby's scheme for the defence of Fort Tuli has been going on ever since, until yesterday, when Pennefather, who is still here, on going round dinners and camp, told me to stop it, as it was all d—d nonsense! and I have stopped it with the greatest pleasure in life, to the still greater pleasure of the men, as you can imagine.

You will wonder how I put up with all this worry and non-

sense, and sometimes I find myself wondering why I do, but, of course, there has been one reason only, and that was because for pecuniary reasons I could not afford to throw up my billet. On this account I adopted the sliding principle as the easiest way to avoid collisions, and now I have quite made up my mind to go.

I was out for a ride with Blowitz this afternoon, and a very amusing coincidence occurred. We got talking about hunting, and he began reciting his various experiences; and of a memorable occasion in particular, which commenced with a fine hunting day, that was as balmy as May, continued with three almighty croppers, and ended with—an awful cropper; and he had just reached the culminating point, and was describing how it was that he came to crop, when (we were in a smart canter at the time) down dropped his old crock on his knees, and head over heels went the gallant Blowitz, the gee following suit in dust a foot deep. No one was hurt, and I had to indulge in a hearty laugh, for Blowitz's dust-begrimed face was a study for no less than a President of the Royal Academy.

Whether or not there is any cry about it, a thin stream of people are coming and going every day. Quite as many through the Transvaal as by the Mafeking-Pilapwie road.

Yesterday morning a crowd of fifty-five in all, De Beer's Syndicate, under Major Hamilton Browne, arrived, and it took me an hour and a half to issue licenses to them.

Major, commonly known as "Maori" Browne, turns out to be the head of the Browne family, who live at Cumber, near Derry, a fine old house standing in beautiful scenery, but owing to some disagreement, he tells me that he left home twenty-seven years ago and has never been there since. Indeed, according to his own account, he has had a most adventurous and erratic career.

He and his party trekked this afternoon. Lions again! Four lions are in our vicinity, and have been seen and heard, but no one has had a shot at them. And this afternoon, while White and I were riding out to the lower drift, we met two Dutchmen, who showed us the spoor of a very large lion, which, they said, was quite fresh.

To revert once more to a much-hackneyed question I have not alluded to of late, from what I can gather, the Pungwe route will not be open until the end of next year.

The telegraph people are pushing ahead with the line to Nuanetsi, and Goddy and I have been for a ride up the

Shashi to see the span across the river, which Mair tells us is 518 yards from pole to pole, the weight of the wire being about 130 lbs. The ground on the western bank is not so high as it might be, but on the east bank, luckily, it is high, for it helps to keep up the span, which droops considerably towards the opposite centre.

Jameson came in from the drifts to-day (28th), at 3.30 p.m. and says that the Boer trek is virtually over. Between 100 and 130 of them, or, including the natives, 200 in all, turned up at the main drift on the 24th. At the time no one but Goddy was there. Jameson himself had left only that morning for Mateepi's kraal, Goold Adams was away at the lower drift, and Capper was up on the higher veldt, ill with fever.

Goddy, however, was quite equal to the emergency, and sent mounted men off for himself and Goold Adams. He was overtaken before he had driven more than eight miles, and when he returned, he found that Ferreira, the leader of the trek, had, on crossing over to our side of the river, been made prisoner by the wily Goddy. Is there not a deal of low comedy, or of the farce about all this, that makes one inclined to scream and squirm? All the responsible men away at the very time they were needed! Luckily the doctor had his head screwed on the right way, and did the right thing. But to go on—Jameson then taking an interpreter and Ferreira with him, went over to the Boer outspan. On arrival there, he informed them that they would not be allowed to cross the river, and advised them to appoint a deputation, to whom he would be only too happy to grant an interview; and having again warned them not to make any hostile attempt to invade our territory, he returned to the camp.

The next morning the Boers sent over Messrs. Senekal, David Malan, and Pete Marais to represent them, who intimated to Jameson that it was their intention to occupy Banyai land by virtue of a concession, which they had in their possession, and on the strength of which they refused point-blank to sign any document, or comply with any rules or regulations of the Chartered Company.

Jameson in reply gave the deputation thoroughly to understand that they would be kept out of the country, over which they had neither claim nor rights, and he advised them to return peaceably to their homes. If, however, any of them were desirous of seeing it, with a view to future settlement or occupation, they would, after approaching the authorities,

obtain the requisite permission, on their binding themselves to abide by the laws of the Company, but that naturally this course was at present out of the question.

The deputation then withdrew, convened a general meeting of the trekkers, told them the result of their interview, and informed them that the Company's police had been reinforced during the night by a party from the Middle Drift, a fact that had been pointed out to them. A resolution was then passed to form a committee—consisting of Senekal, as chairman; Van Soelen, David Malan, and Pete Marais as members, the last named to act as secretary—for the purpose of drawing up a protest, to be submitted to a general meeting, which was ordered for the next day. Ferreira again went over to advise the trekkers to return to their homes without giving any further trouble, while the concessionaries, Messrs. Adendorff and Barend Voster, did their utmost to keep the men together. Some, with an eye to business, began negotiating the sale of meal, tobacco, and salted horses with our troopers, and made preparations to return as advised. Others applied for permission to hunt, and expressed their entire willingness to sign any documents required by the Company, while others again actually asked to join the Company's police.

Seeing it was quite useless to further persevere in the matter, the concessionaries expressed their intention of contesting the legality of their concession with the higher authorities, and the threatened trek was at an end. So utter a collapse, to be accomplished so easily by the soft suavity of a few words, explains the situation better than I can, and what I have just written concerning the state of affairs between the 24th and 27th, speaks only too fluently for itself, and proves beyond doubt that the trek was the work of the concessionaries, backed up by Ferreira and a handful of other agitators, who got it up with a view of making out of it all they could.

That there was any complicity on the part of the Boer Government, I do not for a moment believe, not because of any high-flown principles of integrity, or on the ground of moral scruples, but simply because the time was inopportune, and, with such men as Loch and R—— to deal with, it would have been their own deathblow. And the following incident which I am about to mention, that occurred by accident, however, serves as an excellent illustration of the good temper and peaceful spirit pervading the so-called "hostile" Boers.

Capper, who had got over his attack of fever, commenced

practising down the river with a Maxim, in a direction within a radius that he considered comparatively safe, but it so befell, that a few of the trekkers happened to be crossing the river at the very time, and one or two of the bullets struck quite close to them. Instantly the fact was known to him, Capper ceased firing ; an explanation was offered and accepted in perfectly good faith. Now I maintain that had the temperament of the Boers been inflamed and ill-disposed to us, there was nothing to prevent them placing the wrong construction on a mere accident, and with fatal consequences as a matter of course. I have not for a moment lost sight of the fact, that the small earthworks we had commanded the drift, and that we had two machine guns, while they had none ; but I do not think that this would have deterred them, had they been in an evil frame of mind, and with their natives they were numerically superior to us.

And who will dispute that there is just a flavour of piquancy in the fact of an enemy trying to do a deal with you in horseflesh, and offering to sign documents and join your ranks, when it has been supposed all along they were bent on destroying you ? Do you not think so ?

Ferreira, the leader of the trek, and Jerome, his secretary, were sent in as prisoners on parole on 29th, and are here living in the Pilgrim's Rest, a hut we keep for travellers, while they have their meals with us in the mess hut. Colonel Ferreira, as he calls himself, is a C.M.G., which was bestowed on him for services rendered to us in various native wars, in raising and commanding native levies and colonial corps, and he is said to be a man of great experience in bush fighting. As his name implies, he is of Portuguese descent on his father's side, but Dutch on his mother's. He appears to be a quiet, mild-mannered old man, and does not give me the idea of a ferocious filibuster ; but you can never tell, when still waters run deep. Jerome, his secretary, is an Englishman, and apparently a man of much humility, mingling with an oily plausibility, that is rather trying at times.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FERREIRA AND JEROME PERSUADE US TO SPECULATE.
A COUNTRY OF INTENSE REALITY AND VIOLENT SURPRISES.

From 1st to 11th July, 1891.

I TOLD you in my last scrawl that we had been hobnobbing with the whilom leader of the late trek, but since then we have got on such good terms with them that we have been actually persuaded into joining them in a speculation called the Mashonaland Agricultural and Supply Syndicate, consisting of Ferreira, White, Browne, Nesbitt, Tye, Jerome, and myself.

But we have gone still further, and held meetings, constituted a Committee, appointed Ferreira as Managing Director, Jerome as Secretary at a salary of £10 a month, with shares at £50, half of which has been already subscribed and paid over to Jerome, the balance to be called for on commencing operations ; and, with this object in view, Ferreira and Jerome are starting for Salisbury in a day or two.

When I spoke to you, on a former occasion, of this being a country of surprises, I did not half realise, as I do now, the intense reality of what I had said, and I might have added of situations ; and if W. S. Gilbert wants a few fresh ideas, or to study theatrical effect to a nicety, let him come up here for a spell.

Here were we, not many days ago, absolutely rabid on the Boer question, and ready to slaughter them wholesale ; now as implicitly trusting a pair of utter strangers to any extent. And now that I have been weak enough to commit myself, my heart misgives me.

For myself there is some excuse, however, for I have borne the Boers no ill-will over this trek, am not naturally suspicious, and, with the national failing, am too warm-hearted towards strangers ; but to find the cool, calculating Saxon indulging in such high-flown extravagance is, I think, ludicrous in the extreme.

What next, I should like to know? A man without wit is certainly wanting, for

"He cannot be complete in aught,
Who is not humorously prone."

Wit, as we have before agreed, is the flavour that gives a zest and a piquancy to life; but to be a witless man in these parts is almost impossible, for the moral air of surrounding humanity is very keen, and to be on a level with it, it is necessary to get up very early in the morning and keep both eyes open. At all events, if you do nothing else, you soon learn to appreciate it; but whether our wits have gone astray or not, here have we been dealing in confidence wholesale, as if it was our first venture, and South Africa was a land of saints.

But we shall see.

8th.—I have been to Macloutsie on duty, and returned across the veldt by way of Rhodes' Drift, and I have a good deal to tell you about my little trip.

The ride there was not a bad performance in its way—not for me, but for my pony, who revels in the name of Dandy Dick, successor to poor little Punch. The distance is roughly estimated at 60 miles; but, to be accurate, it is exactly $56\frac{1}{2}$ miles according to telegraphic measurement (the line being $49\frac{1}{4}$, and allowing $7\frac{1}{4}$ for bends and corners).

Starting at 6.30 a.m. from Tuli, I was in the B.B.P. mess at 4.10 p.m., *i.e.* $9\frac{3}{4}$ hours; but as I off-saddled at Semelale and the cross-roads, and halted elsewhere—in all for 3 hours 25 minutes, the time actually employed in riding was only 6 hours and 20 minutes. And yet Master Dick was so fresh as we rode into Macloutsie that he kept shying and trying to bolt, and was quite game and fit enough to go on for another 20 or 30 miles.

Only three days previous to this I had ridden him on a patrol of 80 miles in $21\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and brought him in as fresh as paint.

Indeed, if anything, he has more stamina than Punch had, and yet, if I could, I would willingly have the latter back again; for though Dick and I are friends, we are not on the same terms of intimacy that dear little Punch and I were. I have never told you why I called him so, though you have, no doubt, surmised that it was after the pony I had in Egypt, and you have surmised rightly; for though Punch No. 1 was handsomer, in size and colour they were not unlike. It was in

temperament and characteristics, however, that the similarity was so strong, and in their habits they were identical. But the most striking feature of all was the eye—soft, dark, and liquid, beaming with an expression of far-off human intelligence, and many a time I could have sworn that Punch No. 1 was looking at me through the eye of No. 2. Could it have been reality, or mere imagination on my part? Imagination, I hear you say. But why? What is imagination? A fanciful opinion merely, or a conception of an image in the mind. In other words, a mental effort. But can fancy draw a picture, the faithful representation, likeness, or *facsimile* of an object, without the existence or pre-existence of the object drawn? Or is it simply an abstract effort of a purely abstract quality?

Surely fancy or imagination is a faculty that has absolute power to control or sway the mind at its will and pleasure, now in the abstract realms of phantasy, now in the practical domain of reality? Is it or is it not so?

Positively so to me—one of those great attributes that, like sympathy, love, hope, and mercy, combine in forming the divine and irresistible force of inspiration. In the case that I allude to, then, it was more than a mere fantastical conception; it was a mental effort brought into action by the influence of imagination through the agency of nervous telephony, and with the full co-operation of the mind.

Impossible, you reply; either delusion or hallucination on your part, or, at the most, memory has played you false.

A strong affection for your old favourite, implanted on a retentive faculty, which, in this instance, is unusually so, has photographed on your mental retina a perfect impression of him that requires little or no effort to recall.

By a strange coincidence you got another pony, whose habits and appearance were so like the first with whose impression your mind is so deeply imbued, that imagination, working upon it, deluded you into the belief that the original was before you.

Admissible, I allow; but still I maintain that the former view is no more impossible than that this is possible.

Memory is a mental effort, so I think is imagination—distinctly individual efforts of the one great force, however, acting in co-operation; but here the two are more or less merged together, and while memory simply recalled the impression, imagination drew my attention to the actual existence—the inspired embodiment of the original in another exterior,

But argument is sheer waste of valuable time, and conviction in an unwilling organism is impossible, so we will drop the subject.

I slept in Laurie's hut that night, and the next day (4th) carried out the duty I had come to perform. The Commander of the Limpopo-cum-Crocodile command drove in at midday, and with him Scott, who commands the troop at Gaberones. The last time we had met was at Abu Klea, when I was returning to Korti with the sick and wounded convoy.

The fact that Carrington never appeared at the drifts, and is only now working his way up very leisurely, is certainly conclusive enough to shew that he knew what to expect, for he is essentially a fighter, and nothing would have pleased him better than to have a shy at the Boers.

The following morning, White, whom I had picked up at Macloutsie, started off early, and I left after breakfast, Coventry riding with me as far as Macloutsie Drift. At midday I overtook him. At 2.30 p.m. we reached the old Pioneer Camp, where I had hoped to meet Laurie, but Hendley and Hodgson, two of my men who were on patrol here, told me that it was barely a quarter of an hour since he had left to return to Rhodes' Drift. However, as we had ridden twenty-five miles, we had to off-saddle, and it was after 4.30 p.m. when we resumed our journey, and at 6 p.m. we off-saddled for the night and gave up all hope of overtaking Laurie, as the track would have been impossible to follow in the dark. So, lighting three large fires, we made ourselves as comfortable as we could—a comfort, however, which was short-lived, for down came the rain at 8.30 p.m., continuing steadily all night, and in spite of the shelter that White rigged up, it was wet and miserable, and neither of us got much sleep. However, what with smoking, contemplation, and keeping up the fires, we got through the night.

Breakfasting early, we started in a fine, soft drizzle, but the track was so faint, we had to walk our ponies all the way, and even then kept losing it; and at last we lost it altogether on a large hill, that fell sheer about 500 feet into a fine valley, with splendid large trees and long grass. Laurie's waggon had evidently been along here, but finding its further progress cut short so precipitately, had turned and gone back, so we retraced our footsteps, and made our way across the veldt in the required (south-easterly) direction, which we had the luck to find out by a mere momentary glimpse of the sun, the only one we got all the day.

What a strange sensation it is, when one is alone in the veldt, alone with self and conscience, while all around, except for the occasional twittering of the smaller birds and the calling of the larger, is death-like stillness ; when you are, so to speak, steeped in silence, encompassed by solitude, and feel more or less overawed by some unseen power, that seems to take unconscious possession of soul and body. How strange it is, when imbued and filled with this hidden feeling, you ride over hill after hill, and through one valley into another, until you reach the top of one ridge only to find another beyond, higher and further off than ever, then to see all around the same interminable, bush-covered stretches, here rising up, there sloping down, and yet all meeting, apparently, in one point in the distant horizon ; how strange, suddenly and unexpectedly to stumble on humanity in the form of a superior kind of human ape, and to hear the bleating of sheep, the baaing of goats, and the deeper lowing of the cattle.

This is what happened to White and myself when we found ourselves in a cattle-post of Mangwatos. Our appearance evidently surprised them as much as it did us, startled females out of their wits, for they seized their piccaninnies and bolted like red-shanks into the thick bush all round. The men were warming themselves round a fire, munching locusts with a relish. So by signs, and one way or the other, we induced one of them to shew us the track for two shillings, and when we had gone about a mile and a half, we struck Laurie's track once more.

At midday we off-saddled, and in spite of the rain White lit a fire, and made some cocoa, which, as we were wet to the skin, proved most grateful. At 1 p.m. we on-saddled, and went on again in heavy rain, and at 2.30 p.m. we came up to a waggon of the B.B.P. that had broken down. Corporal Murphy, who was in charge of it, a fine, strapping specimen of a Colonial, gave us a cup of coffee with some fresh milk in it, which we drank down with a relish and a gusto that would have made a club-lounger stare. After chatting with him for ten minutes, we rode on, and at 6 p.m., seeing no sign of the river, we decided on off-saddling for the night. There was no water anywhere near ; but luckily for us a very heavy shower of rain fell, so I gathered enough in a spruit to give us each a cup of coffee. Not only were we soaking, but everything in our packs was wet through and through ; however, we made a grand fire, and managed to get ourselves fairly dry, although it kept on drizzling until midnight. We were obliged

to sit up all night, as it was too wet to lie down ; and what with the continuous soaking of thirty-six hours, no rest for two nights, and no morning coffee, we were awful wrecks when we once more made a start. The track, which was now fairly plain, especially the last few miles, was simply execrable—stony, stumpy, and heavy from rain as it was. But the country we passed through looked a likely one for game, intersected as it was with lovely little streams, and plenty of water. We got to Laurie's camp in time for breakfast ; and after partaking of some, as well as a change and a rest, we felt more like ourselves once again. Longfellow says :

“ How beautiful is the rain,
After the dust and heat !

• • •
How beautiful is the rain ! ”

And under certain conditions, seated in a cosy arm-chair in a nice room, and looking out of a window on to the parched verdure beneath you, a sense of enjoyment and beauty is doubtless possible. But given thirty-six hours' continuous rain, sitting all day drenched to the skin in a wet saddle, and lying all night on the moist ground, I question if it is feasible to see any beauty whatever in it.

Beit's waggons, under Fort, ex-private secretary to Sir Henry Loch, crossed the Crocodile at Rhodes' Drift this morning, and went on again towards Tuli this afternoon.

The following day (8th), breakfasting and lunching with Laurie, I left him at 2 p.m., he riding as far as the Kaffir Start with me. When about six miles from Tuli, I passed Beit's turn-out, reaching the fort a little after 5 p.m.

During my absence Lord Randolph Churchill's outfit, under Major Giles, has arrived here, and several of them dined with us that night.

I find that Sapte returned from his shooting expedition without having shot anything, and he, Gascoigne, and Morier left here at 9.30 a.m., by the Pietersburg coach for the Cape.

10th. Beit's waggons under Fort arrived here yesterday, and Sir Frederic Carrington, Gray, and Scott came in at 1.30 p.m. to-day. This morning (11th) Coventry turned up from Macloutsie, and for Carrington's benefit I had some long-distance firing with the Maxim and Gardiner.

In conclusion, I must give you a short sketch of some of the celebrities who are at present up here.

Major Giles, who is in command of the Randolphian expedition, is a great big rollicking spirit, standing six feet four inches in his stockings, always jovial and noisy, an out-and-out sporting character, a member of the Pelican and Turf Clubs, which speaks volumes in itself. He is very proud of himself for having brought up a dozen horses from Kimberley without having lost one of them from horse sickness ; but he is quite oblivious of the fact that this is not the season for the disease in question.

The doctor, a small man, with a remarkably big opinion of himself—as nearly all little men, somehow or other, seem to have—by name Rayner, but better known in town as “Twister of the Pink Un,” a title he prefers to be known by, coupled with the fact that his regiment is the Grenadier Guards. Needless to say that he also is a sporting man, and a member of the same clubs as Giles.

Captain Williams, a son of General Owen Williams, and late of the Horse Guards, is a quiet, retiring man, who wears spectacles, and spends most of his time in playing with sextants, and other scientific astronomical instruments, or, as he calls it, in “taking observations,” occasionally on the wrong star ; but that, no doubt, is a part of the starry science that I do not understand.

Edgehill, another strapping specimen, about the same height as Giles, who has cowboyed it—excuse the short cut—in America, seems to be a very useful member of the show, and a very nice fellow into the bargain.

Last, but by no means least, is Mr. Perkins, a mining expert and an American, said to be the cleverest in the world—by the outfit, of course. A tall order, but I believe he is really first-rate, and though seemingly very quiet, is full of conversation and drollery, when you draw him out and get him into a good swing.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TULI.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

From 12th to 17th July, 1891.

FTER so complete a Jamesonian prosody, the least I can do is to have a Randolphian rhapsody, for it is not every day that we have a Privy Councillor and an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer to grace our common board ; not that I intend having a rap at him, or at any one else for the matter of that, for, in spite of an overweening conceit and a violent temper, his lordship has been particularly agreeable and affable to all of us. But I am afraid I cannot devote an entire effusion to him, as we have so many other notabilities also staying here, among them Beit, one of our directors, and financial adviser to the concern ; also Messrs. Rolker and Perkins, a pair of Americans, said to be the greatest mining experts in the world, of whom I must give you just a snack.

This morning (12th), about 11 o'clock I was walking past Tye's hut, when Laurie suddenly rode up, in company with no less a person than Lord Randolph himself, whom, travel-stained and dirty, I did not at first recognise. I was just on the point of committing myself, but Laurie, who was equal to the occasion, tipped me a wink, and at the same time introduced me to Lord Randolph without waiting for him to dismount. Then, when he did, I was at once struck by the wonderful likeness that exists, in spite of the beard he has grown, between the reality and the journalistic caricatures. His lordship lunched and dined with us, but, evidently very much knocked up after his journey, he retired very early.

Jameson left for Salisbury this afternoon. Whether it is that now the Boer trek is over his presence up there is necessary, or whether it is his hatred of ceremonial and functions have hurried him away, I am not quite sure, but should imagine that the latter reason has more to do with it than the former.

Before going, I asked him if it was true about Pennefather's resignation, and he replied that it was, but that the Governor

and Rhodes had asked him to stay on for a little while, but that he had no doubt of his going eventually. It is quite evident to me that Jameson, as Administrator, will not long tolerate him, and this flying visit of his down here, when his place was distinctly up country, has upset even Jameson's equilibrium. "If Pennefather wanted to see me," he said, "having come all this way, why the d-v-l didn't he ride down to the drifts. I certainly had no intention of coming in here to see him."

This afternoon Capper returned from the Main Drift with another attack of fever, and Brown, Laurie, and I walked down to Lord Randolph's camp, and had a look round the whole outfit, at which he is greatly pleased, and legitimately so, for it is quite the best appointed expedition that has passed or is likely to pass through, especially in the way of horses and guns, of which he has a splendid battery of all kinds.

At 10.30 a.m. to-day (13th), Lord Randolph visited the fort, and saw the Maxim and Gatling fired at objects 1600 to 1700 yards distant. The practice with both guns was good, and he was greatly pleased with it, but especially with the shooting of the latter, which is an improvement on the old weapon. We also tried the magazine rifle, that was presented to him for trial by the Secretary of State for War, against the Martini-Henry, and found that at 1600 yards the shooting was fairly even.

Laurie returned to Rhodes' Drift in the afternoon, and Lord Randolph, who, with his party, has a standing invitation, dined with us. He seems, more or less, to have recovered from the effects of his journey, and he talked a good deal, especially about the Matabele, who, in his opinion, are more formidable than we imagine, or give them credit for, and with whom we are bound to have a row before long. Just what I have been saying all along, and still say, that when we least expect it, the smouldering fire of hatred will burst into a general conflagration. Yesterday (14th) was quite an eventful day in the annals of Tuli.

In the afternoon we had rather an interesting, though cold-blooded, experiment, the proposer of which was Lord Randolph himself. In the bed of the river, looking up stream, a live slaughter bullock (which was to supply us with meat the next day), was tied to a stake driven into the sand, with a tether from five to six yards long. Capper, a good, steady target shot, was chosen to fire at it, so as to test the accuracy and penetration of the rifle. The first three shots he fired

to get the range, which he fixed at 1550 yards. Then he commenced, and made good shooting, the bullets striking just over and all round the unfortunate animal, one of them apparently hitting him, for he gave a jump, until the seventeenth shot, which dropped him instantaneously. On riding out and examining the bullock, two wounds were found. One, the first, clean through the fleshy part of his neck, the second entering the rump, the animal evidently standing obliquely towards the fire; the bullet had passed down, severing the spine, then on through the milt, and out on the left side, close to the short ribs.

When the experiment was over, speaking on the subject to Lord Randolph, I said that if either Exeter Hall or the truth-loving Labby got hold of it, they would raise a terrific howl, and that the latter would be only too delighted to have such an excellent opportunity of bringing into action all the artillery of his sarcasm against him.

I will spare you the remarks about the Hall of Exeter, which were strong, pointed, and most unparliamentary, also of one or two members of the House, who, he said, were only too glad to make capital out of anything. But to the latter part of my statement he replied, "Oh, no. Labby is not that sort of man at all, and will not take the slightest notice of it. He is much misjudged, and is far better than he is painted. He is a man of decidedly strong character, the bitterest enemy, but the best, sincerest friend to a friend that I have ever met, and he will stick to him through thick and thin." Of Gladstone as a man, in reply to a question of mine, he spoke in terms of the sincerest admiration, and as a politician with respect and without the slightest animus, but with an evident conviction that the Grand Old Man had never been cut out for a statesman. Wolseley, he said, was very clever, undoubtedly, but the clique in the War Office thought more of themselves than they did of the service. Indeed, the way in which he conversed about several other of our leading men gave me the impression that Lord R. was an unprejudiced and broad-minded man, a decided improvement on the estimate I had so far formed of him, which, to quote from my day-book, was this: "Lord Randolph does not impress me at all. Though not short, somehow or other, he looks quite as insignificant and whippery-snappery as the papers represent him; but the curious part of it is that although he is barely 5 ft. 8 in., he maintains that he is 5 ft. 10 in., and this question of height is evidently a very touchy point with him

in, for it is not an every-day occurrence to hear so well-known a man as Lord Randolph, and, up to the present, this is the first and only speech he has made in South Africa.

Had I more time, I would give you a very much fuller account, added to a word-painting of the scene—the enormous pile of trees and brushwood crackling and hissing, as one by one they were thrown on the burning heap by a file of dusky Matabele, whose agile forms stood boldly out in the firelight, as they kept adding fuel to the flame, under the guidance of a stalwart trooper of herculean proportions, which sent upwards and around a light so far-reaching as to illumine all the surrounding country, and created a glow so fervent that we were obliged to sit at a distance of about 200 yards away. The forms of the men in all kinds of attitudes, standing, sprawling, and sitting, many of them hatless and coatless, with shirt sleeves rolled up, in all the abandonment of free and easy enjoyment, typical specimens of British manhood and vitality, ready and fit for action, they looked as they are—pioneers not in name only, but in vigorous deed, of an empire excelling all others in extent and power, and of a civilisation that stands first and foremost in the universe.

A scene never to be forgotten, but engraved on the mental retina with the indelible seal of inspired imagination ! a scene prophetic of the future, and typical of far-reaching consequences, that we can have no idea of, much less realise, for as I wrote to you nearly a year ago, we are, I believe, making history with a vengeance, in preparing Africa as a European battlefield.

To resume. When the notes of the last song had died away, the chairman having effected silence, in a few words I thanked Lord Randolph for his speech, and for the complimentary allusions that he had made to us. I then called upon the men to give him three cheers, a call they responded to in their usual hearty manner. Sir Fred Carrington then, in brisk and energetic language, gave vent to sentiments breathing of fire and sword, meant for a nation not 1000 miles away, a result of the roasting that he had been undergoing, I expect. Cheers for himself and others were given lustily, when I called for three and then one more for Her Majesty ; and to wind up, "God Save the Queen," sung as I have never heard it, by several hundred manly voices in lusty unison, rent the midnight air, and put an end to the proceedings.

We then adjourned to the mess, to a supper of grilled bones and champagne, which our thoughtful president had ordered

sides ; and when silence had been restored, he stood up and spoke somewhat as follows :

“ Officers and men of the Bechuanaland and Matabeleland—(here he hesitated, as if being uncertain what to call us)—Forces : I have travelled over many portions of the Queen’s dominions, and I have never seen—and I say it without any fulsome flattery—I have never seen a body of men with whom I would sooner trust myself in the hour of peril ; and if you are ever called upon, I am certain you will prove yourselves worthy of the great possessions you are guarding, and the great Empire to which we all have the honour to belong. If I have not had a very eventful life, I have, at least, had one full of incidents, and this one, 7000 miles away from the great metropolis of London, has impressed me more with the might of England and her vast possessions than anything I have hitherto witnessed. The spectacle you have this evening placed before me will never fade from my memory, and the blaze of that bright fire and the strains of your songs will ever be before my mind. When I think of the undertaking you are engaged in, the magnitude of the possessions you protect, extending from the Cape to the Zambesi, the knowledge of what you have already done will nerve me to further exertions in welding and uniting these great and scattered possessions into one great Empire—the greatest and most magnificent the world has ever seen. I can only say, in conclusion, that you are making a great name for yourselves, and that you are, perhaps unknown to yourselves, making history.”

No sooner had he finished, than the men with one accord burst into another mighty cheer, a hearty, ringing British cheer, that pleased the speaker immensely, because of its heartiness and spontaneity. Of course the speech is not given in its entirety, but I think you have the kernel of it, and I am indebted to Angus, who assists me in the orderly-room, for making these notes.

Randolph speaks well, and his speech on this occasion was a good one, but he is no orator. His words were well chosen, language effective and to the point, but with no delivery or effect. Rather in a dreamy, sing-song voice he seemed to be spouting a set speech, while his language was decidedly complimentary, and calculated to excite popular feeling ; but his want of delivery and declamation failed to convey to his audience the magnetic current of what otherwise would have been soul-stirring. Some allowance must of course be made, because the speech was entirely impromptu and made on the spur of the moment, as the idea to get him to speak was only an after-dinner thought, of which he had not even an inkling !

On all sides, and by every one, it was acknowledged to be the best camp fire they had ever seen, and from beginning to end everything passed off smoothly and without a hitch. Certainly it was the most historic blaze I have ever taken part

in, for it is not an every-day occurrence to hear so well-known a man as Lord Randolph, and, up to the present, this is the first and only speech he has made in South Africa.

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We then adjourned to the mess, to a supper of grilled bones and champagne, which our thoughtful president had ordered

for us, and it was early morning before peace reigned over the usually peaceful Tuli.

All the celebrities lunched with us to-day (15th), including Caldecott and Rolker, and Giles took it into his head to draw the latter, which ended in the tables being turned on him by the American, much to my delight, for the ex-gunner is as noisy and aggressive as a battery in action, and such a striking contrast to the quiet humour of the New Yorker, who is an expert in more than mining—in the chess of words, the play and by-play of which have a depth equal to the deepest moves of the great game of skill; for while the former was coarse in his blunt brutality, the latter struck right home with all the refinement of a placid but ready wit.

I am all the more pleased at the result because, according to the account given by Giles and the little doctor, every place through which the outfit have passed has been *painted red* by them.

I am not well up in the slang of Cockneydom and sport, yet have picked up quite enough in the last few days to determine me not to learn any more, but I have, however, learnt quite sufficient to object with the rest of us to a *colour* that we have no predilection for; so in spite of "green" being the prevailing colour in Tuli—an optical illusion, surely—the outfit will have to leave without having splashed or even blotted us all over with their now quite famous and historic *red*!

What an exposition in the "nature" called "human" this has been! How small and narrow, indeed, is this same humanity; and to what doubtful depths does it not sink on the one hand, rising on the other to mere shallows with engulfing quicksands! And what an elastic capacity has the mind that inspires it, stretching out at times to a tension that snaps in two, or curling up into a shrinking atom that is incapable of even a grasp?

After lunch I heard a rather good story about our Finance Minister, which I must pass on to you, not as mere gossip, but as unfolding another of those unfathomable shallows in which humanity abounds. It seems that this morning, in the early hours preceding the birth of dawn, Beit, overcome by feeling—that irresistible and greatest of all forces—and his imagination fired by the fervid sympathy of his surroundings—the fire glow, the songs, the ardour and animation of the men—his enthusiasm was raised to such a pitch of sublime excitement, that he sat up in bed and declared his intention to become a

trooper. And this is the conversation overheard between him and his other self :

"What's the use of being a millionaire?" "None!"

"Of what good is money?" "None!"

"A trooper's is the life for me. No care, no trouble. All the world before me. No life like a trooper's. A millionaire—all suspense, all anxiety. Not worth living. I shall enlist to-morrow.

"Trooper's the life. No care—trouble. No care—no care. Enlist to-morrow."

Caldecott, who was by at the time, was so tickled at the grim humour of the great man, that he said, "But would you not sooner be an officer, like L——, who commands Tuli?"

"No. Officers have ambition; he has ambition, and wants to get on. A trooper's the life for me; a trooper—trooper—trooper." And then sleep came.

The beauty of it all is that this maudlin outburst of a spurious sentiment is already buried in enforced oblivion, and this morning there is a look of subdued dejection about the great man, in such direct contrast to his earlier mood, as to excite reflection.

Can it be that the living force of undying heredity awoke in the now peaceful and commercial mind of a descendant of the once warlike race who, with the God of Battles on their side, went forth to certain victory, scattering their enemies like chaff before the wind, a spark of martial ardour, and a strain of the spirit of his fighting forefathers?

Or was it, after all, but a sham sentiment, evoked by the extreme pepperiness of the devil, and the temporary effervescence of the cham.? I wonder! I wonder!

And such is the material out of which financiers are evolved!

This evening some of us, including myself, dined with Lord Randolph, who was in excellent form, conversational and otherwise, for he had evidently quite recovered from the effects of his journey, which had taken a great deal out of him. His conversation, however, ran in the one narrow groove, and during the whole of dinner, he did nothing but keep up a running fire of racing anecdotes and reminiscences about Colonel North, that in him seemed to evoke amusing memories, at the same time that they gave general amusement, many of them being of the letting-the-cat-out-of-the-bag description, and all of them of course being at the expense of the Nitrate King. It was he who had initiated North into the idiosyncrasies of the turf; but he was no sportsman, and had only taken up racing

to make money. This was the sum and substance of the evening's talk, except the stories, which, as I did not try to remember them, have escaped my memory.

The issue of the first copy of the *Tuli Times*, on this 16th day of July, marks an event in the steady progress and advancement we are making in the development of Mashonaland, and I cannot do better than to enclose you a copy, and call your special attention to the introduction. If nothing more, it is a journalistic curio, but an effort in the right direction, as a means of advertisement, and a ventilation of local facts and outside news. Just take the gradations. From cook to capitalist, from farmer to financier, and from all combined to editor. What a flight and stretch of imagination is necessary to grasp the sum total and the difference! And what a splendid picture in a small compass am I placing before you of life under new conditions! Better a thousand times than all the wordy illustrations that I could give you.

This afternoon a drive for deer, proposed by Carrington, came off. The beaters, 25 in number - all mounted - rode early to the appointed place, in a large vley, about ten miles distant, that runs between the hills down to the river Macloutsie. At 1 p.m. we started, and at 2 p.m. the drive commenced.

It was an extremely picturesque sight to see the men in their large sombreros, set off by puggrees of various colours (according to the different troops they belonged to), which at times was all that could be seen of them, as they skirmished, in a long and flexible line, right across the valley, through the long grass and reeds, the sportsmen on either flank, just under the hills, and 30 to 40 yards in advance of the beaters, for whom they would wait, having taken up a position of vantage on some rising ground, on the *qui vive*, and ready for the buck to spring out of its ready lair. So high and thick was the grass in many places that the men disappeared altogether, and the horses being unable to force their way through, the riders were obliged to make detours, so as to get round.

Two bucks only were shot, one reed buck by Carrington, and one bush buck by Grey. Randolph did not even get a shot at one, but after the drive he bagged a few partridge, and fell into a large ant bear hole, not an uncommon occurrence even when you know the country. A few other bucks were seen, also boars, but were not procured; so, in the growing dusk, we returned to the fort, satisfied with the outing, if not with the day's sport.

I have so far said little to you of Carrington, who is so well

known out in South Africa as a dashing soldier and keen sportsman. Certainly, it is when fighting or sport of any kind is going on, hunting and shooting especially, that he is in his element, and the more danger the greater the element. To see him ride or shoot is to understand how, in his younger days, he raised colonial corps, and commanded them by sheer force of strength and skill of fisticuffs ; and to see him stand on his own strong legs, or bestriding a horse, he is a splendid specimen of a man and a soldier—tall, strong, active, and daring—and I do not know how it is, but he always puts me in mind of Iago's song :

“ Some wine, ho !
And let me the canakin clink, clink ;
And let me the canakin clink :
A soldier's a man ;
A life's but a span ;
Why, then, let a soldier drink.”

But it is in his physical accomplishments that Carrington principally shines, and, in comparison to them, his mental development is very small. And while there is no danger that he would not face, he has not the head-piece to get a force out of a self-imposed predicament. Beit and Caldecott left this morning (17th) to catch up their waggons, that started yesterday, and Lord Randolph and his party have also gone on.

His lordship lunched with us, and before leaving he made a speech thanking us all for our kindness and hospitality, but instead of addressing it to my humble self, he addressed it to Carrington, who is a visitor and guest of ours just as he is. Of course Sir Frederic did not budge, so I had to get on my pins, and say the usual thing, wishing him and his party, on behalf of us all, the best of good luck. This mistake, on Lord Randolph's part, was not made in ignorance, therefore the only conclusion I can come to, is that it was done on purpose, and as such was an arrant piece of uncalled-for and unnecessary snobbishness, in keeping with the line of behaviour he adopted on his way out in the *Grantully Castle*. For while it did me no harm and wounded no susceptibilities of mine, it placed Carrington in a very unpleasant and false position.

Now they have gone, Thank goodness ! is all I can say, for though it has been, in a certain sense, a relaxation and a study, we shall once more have peace and quietness. Excitement is all very well in its way, but there are certain forms of it that are over-stimulating, and which do more harm than good, while peace is always refreshing and recuperative !

Yet I am glad I have met Lord Bardolph Weathervane, which I think is an excellent nickname for our ex-minister, and specially graphic correspondent.

One thing I have learnt from his stay here is the weight on his mind of two topics, which he never lost an opportunity of airing—the Matabele and the Boers. The former he is positive will fight before long, and his one wish is to get out of the country before they do. The latter, from what he has seen of them on his way through the Transvaal, are a contemptible, useless lot, for whom he has an intense disgust and dislike! And so strongly has he written about them, he told us with a smile, that he dare not return home that way, as they would probably lynch him. Indeed, from what he has said on this and one or two other points, I have already changed my opinion as to his breadth of mind.

I cannot say, from what I have seen of Lord Randolph, that I have conceived either admiration or respect for him. A man more eaten up by his own conceit I have never seen—a conceit that, in combination with a bad temper, accounts more than anything else, I should think, for the unstability of his character.

Of Beit I have said little or nothing, for the pure and simple reason that I have not much to say. That he is a millionaire and a great financier, I am informed on good authority, and take it for granted. Had I, on the other hand, been in ignorance of his entity, I should, I must honestly confess, have taken him for a nonentity, and certainly not have given him the credit of being either millionaire or financier. For he is a most unassuming and altogether unostentatious man of wealth, and as kindly, courteous, and quiet as it is possible to be. Very ordinary and meagre in his ideas, and very commonplace in his conversation, he is one of the last men that I should have picked out of a crowd as able and capable!

But there is no accounting for the thoroughly deceitful and entirely baffling nature of appearance and of social intercourse! Or can it be that luck, in many instances, has much to say to the making of a good fortune? Or yet again, is there some special grasp of opportunity and power of retention in the Jewish character that succeeds where all else fails? Whatever it is, Beit must be either so deep or so shallow, that in one case it is impossible to get to the bottom of him, and in the other, although it is possible to look through, it is quite as impossible to see anything!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TULI.

SYNDICATE ON THE BRAIN—PREVAILING ORDER AND SYSTEM.

From 18th to 31st July, 1891.

SINCE the wily Ferreira-Jerome combination implanted in us the idea, we have all got syndicate on the brain, and gone stark, staring mad, launching out in every direction ; our latest enterprise being the "Limpopo Prospecting Syndicate," consisting of Carrington, Goold Adams, Grey, White, Scott, Tye, Brown, and my humble self, to prospect between here and Mateepis kraal along the north bank of the Limpopo. What we are going to find is an after-question ; what we are going to look for is the inevitable gold which has not yet been found, although silver reefs abound. But silver, as a glut in the market, is beneath our contempt ; and hope, that sovereign balsam, another of the essential components of living inspiration, has come to our rescue on the lightning wings of alacrity, and not only do we find it soothing, but nourishing, fattening and flourishing on it as a babe does on emulsions of cod liver oil, but with all the refinement of an airy fairy process !

Another sample of the order and system prevailing up here. Tye heard from Harris last mail from Victoria, who, it seems, ordered Coope and a party of men to improve and repair the Tuli road, which is badly in want of it after the rains. Pennefather on his way up met the party at the Narka Pass, and turned them back.

To turn to a more interesting subject, however, E. A. Maund arrived here yesterday, *en route* to Salisbury, and lunched with us to-day.

A man of University education and culture, he would be interesting to talk to at any time, but as a man who has been roughing it up in these parts ever since he took part in Warren's expedition, and who has lived for several months at a stretch in Buluwayo, he is doubly entertaining. He speaks

very well of Lobengula, of whom he saw a great deal, as shrewd, long-headed, and a friend of the white man, and, judged by their own standard, a liberal and far-seeing monarch; while as to the future of this ancient El Dorado under a new name, he is decidedly hopeful.

We have had more speechifying, on a smaller scale, however — Carrington thanking us heartily for our hospitality, in his own name and in that of his officers, to which I replied in as few words as possible. I hate speaking of any kind, but of this sort in particular. In the first place, because I do not possess the art, or even the knack. In the second place, because it is a *mére* act of formality, and I detest formality or ceremonial of any description. Not for the reason that I altogether despise it, but simply from the fact that at heart I am a Bohemian. Indeed, I go so far as to recognise the necessity of it, and think it most certainly should form one of the items in the programme of a liberal education. But not for me, thank you ; that is all I ask.

21st. Carrington, Grey, and Scott left yesterday for Macloutsie, and we have once more settled down to the old life, and I am not sorry, though I am not going to deny that it has been a pleasant break ; but the excitement has been rather too much of the fitful, feverish type to suit my taste.

As a result of my conversation with Jameson, I have written a clear and concise letter to Mr. Rhodes, proposing a scheme for the introduction and breeding of camels in Mashonaland, and I have now made up my mind to write a long *précis* on the treatment and management of camels, which I intend to forward to Cape Town, to convince Mr. Rhodes that the plan suggested is quite feasible and thoroughly practical ! These facts he cannot fail to recognise, if he will only take the trouble to read my *précis*.

In addition to this, I have written to him regarding the importation of some Syrian donkeys, to improve the breed, and give a stimulus to the raising of mules ; also to secure the employment of a few mahouts from India with a view to catching and taming the wild elephants, which are plentiful in Mashonaland, to utilise them for the transport of heavy goods, such as mining machinery. For even when the railway is made they will still be useful in the outlying districts.

There is nothing chimerical about this last suggestion. A glance at Schweinfurth's *Heart of Africa* will shew that history would only be repeating itself, for he proves incontestably,

through the testimony of medals and coins, the employment in Ethiopia of tame elephants. This phase of history repeating itself, by the way, is, after all, something more than a mere vain repetition, do you not think so?—for there is little, if anything, new under the sun. We talk of *new thought* and *new ideas*, but if the living force that inspires thought, as it does every unit and fraction of Nature—human, animal, and vegetable—is eternal, as I (a mere molecule of this catholic and universal cosmos) for one fully believe, how can thought be *new*?

Surely many of our so-called *new ideas* are but resuscitations of ones that have existed long since. Surely modern thought is but the putting of *old wine* into *new bottles*—the same thought that has existed, is existing, and will go on existing in a living cycle of inspiration for ever and aye under the dictation of new conditions and circumstance, clothed, in fact, in a new dress and in a new fashion. And it is not thought, but dress and fashions that change! Are not the discoveries and inventions, many of which are more ancient than we think, but the result of riper education, expansion, and development of *old-time* thought? And is not this the accumulation, in fact, of individual human ideas of every age, which have not, as we think, been lost in the void of Nature, because they have not been set down, but which have gone back to the source from whence they came, adding to and enriching the power of thought, to return again and again to human nature all the stronger and the richer because of the experience of age unlimited and variety infinite! And is not this same mechanism that we call memory a *revival* of what has gone before, or what has occurred to us, God knows when and where?

Or put it in another way. Is it not a survival of a pre-existence that comes back to us, renovated and renewed in force and vigour, during the lapse of an apparent dormancy, thereby matured from an experience that is seemingly mystical, and so enriched by a natural and perfectly systematic cultivation that it expands into the flower of a beautiful thought, or into the still more practical expression of a noble action.

But to return to the reality of memorabilia. Denison and Erskine returned from Salisbury, and dined with us this evening. The former is looking very washed-out, the result of fever, but the latter, although he says he has had fever two or three times, looks the picture of rude and vigorous health.

Indeed, the trip seems to have improved him in every way, and he is certainly manlier and more subdued than he was when he went up. In spite of his general improvement, however, he has nothing but abuse for everyone and everything all round: the country—or more particularly the climate—the horses; while the Company's officials, and Harris especially, he abused roundly, squarely, and triangularly! But his is not the material out of which Pioneers are framed and fashioned, and as he has left for good by the Pietersburg coach, along with Denison and the two Beddingtons, who have had enough of shooting, we will dismiss him as unworthy of further thought.

This out-of-the-way corner in a great continent, this tiny speck of clearing in a dense bush veldt, which only a year ago was the haunt of all kinds of game, is growing quite into the dignity of a little township, out of the mushroom growth of a shanty village.

On this side of the river, and right under the guns of the fort, we have our own large corrugated-iron stores—one for commissariat, the other for quartermaster's stores. Between them and the river, the Tuli Trading Association have a store, also of iron, and Homan, Weil's agent, has another, while further on are a barber's shop with the traditional pole, tenanted by an Indian coolie, a confectionery and baking establishment in course of construction, Campbell and Drummond's Tuli Restaurant, Conrath's billiard-room and soda water manufactory, also the office of the *Tuli Times*, and close to the drift a blacksmith's and wheelwright's concern. On the other bank, Homan has opened a hotel with a liquor licence, and a bar without a barmaid, and there are two small trading stores, an opposition smithy; while our old and energetic friend Campbell is also building a hotel.

Then, when you consider that we have a telegraph office, which in a few hours connects us with the home country, at the not exorbitant rate of 8s. 9d. a word, you must allow that rapid progress has been made, and that the Company have grappled the task in hand with a thoroughness of purpose which is distinctly creditable.

The railway in working order to Vryburg, and in course of construction to Mafeking, is another living evidence of the rapid reality and soundness of northern development; and all this from the conception of an active mind and an energetic personality, assisted by clear heads, brave hearts, and strong

hands. With such the achievement of anything, and the conquest of everything, is an easy matter.

It is only necessary to live in Tuli for a few weeks, more especially since the opening of the road to Victoria and Salisbury, and see for oneself the overflowing stream of people and waggons who are pouring in steadily, some with their families, and others with their little all on donkeys' backs or on shanks' mare ; for each month the number drifting through is certainly increasing, while, in addition to the police, there must be already over 1000 people in Mashonaland, youth and age mingling, the one exulting in the exuberance of untried vitality, and in blissful ignorance of life's realities—revelling in the ravishing visions of golden days ; the other close to the threshold of an existence that is oozing away, and hardened by the grim realities of the burning furnace through which they have passed, yet, for all that, toiling and moiling up to the last in a vague and hopeless hope that "it" will all come right in the end.

Poor "it." What is "it" after all ? Life, or sanguine expectations of improving the hard and cruel conditions of the present ? But not even a thought of what is coming—the certain gloom of transition or translation—or what lies beyond this again. And among those who have passed, I have seen one or two old men struggling along, simply to come up here and die.

"When he is forsaken,
Withered and shaken,
What can an old man do but die?"

Sad, alas ! but only too true. Oh, human Tom Hood, with your infinite pathos and intense reality, what a true son of Nature were you, and how thoroughly earnest, in spite of wit's gracious riches !

25th.—On my return this evening from a long ride, I found Laurie in my hut. He had just ridden in from Rhodes' Drift with the man called Hassforther, for whom we have been on the look-out during the past few months. In company with a man called Oscar Dettelbach, they were attempting to pass the post, when they were stopped and brought before Laurie. They gave their names openly, and Hassforther stated boldly that he had just returned from Germany, and wanted to get to Buluwayo ; so to simplify matters, Laurie brought them on here.

They are both Germans ; but while Hassforther is common,

objectionable, and of a decidedly low type, Dettelbach, who is a Jew, is far superior in every way—unobtrusive, and by no means offensive. True to his racial instincts, he is as sharp as a needle, under an assumption of dulness—shrewd and intelligent, and one of the quickest and smartest men at figures I have ever seen.

Why our mess should be made a convenience for every Jack, Tom, and Harry that is arrested or detained, or why it is converted into a resort for all destitute or disreputable vagabonds, who are obnoxious to the Company, I fail to see. As an experience I do not mind; but on principle I have a strong objection. This time, however, we have not been burdened for long, as Hassforther and Dettelbach returned yesterday (27th) to Rhodes' Drift, and to-day a wire came from Bower to Goold Adams concerning them. As it was only half an hour since he had left for the main drift, I got on Dick, and rode after him; and in an hour's time, after covering between eight and nine miles, I overtook him. The telegram was to the effect that Hassforther could be released, and allowed to cross over into the Transvaal, if he signed a document binding himself not to enter either Matabele or Mashona lands.

Promising to communicate with Laurie on the subject, I left Goold Adams, and returned here, to find a wire from Grey that Rennie Tailyour had been arrested trying to get into Buluwayo.

Peter Flower, a brother of our man's, and Du Cane, who have been here for four days, and of whom we have seen a lot, left for Salisbury this evening, the 30th; and I shall miss the former, who is cheery, amusing, and has quite a fund of anecdote at his ready disposal.

So the papers have been saying that people in Mashonaland have been having a very rough time of it. No doubt; but I need hardly remind you that papers are not invariably reliable, and to create a little excitement during the dull round of ordinary routine, they will perjure the iota that is immortal about them for a trifle dished up in a sensational sauce, and the more highly flavoured it is the better.

That at times they get their information from inaccurate and ill-fed sources is notorious, so that you cannot always confide even in the most respectable organs. Added to this, the Company has many enemies, who keep on writing to the dailies and weeklies, representing matters in a light a hundred times

worse than they really are, until it becomes a matter of extreme difficulty to find a genuine grain among the bushels of journalistic chaff; and, strange anomaly, *Truth* is the most glaring offender of the lot.

The people up country have certainly had a rough time of it—only what was expected, however, and not nearly so bad as it has been painted.

I had quite forgotten to mention that Mother Patrick and the Sisters have at last left us, and gone to Salisbury, to the deep regret, it is needless for me to say, of everyone in the place, as no words of mine can convey the universal esteem, respect, admiration, and affection in which they are held; and speaking for myself personally, I cannot say enough, but I think all the more. Father Prestige has, of course, accompanied them, and also Nesbitt.

In connection with this a curious thing has happened. An ex-trooper of the B.B.P., whose name I have forgotten, but who was a Catholic and a Colonial, and went up with them as a general factotum, was lost at Umzingwan. It appears that while they were outspanned there he went out shooting, but never returned; and though they remained in the place, and searched for him everywhere, discovering no trace of him, they had to go on, but up to the present he has not turned up, and the general supposition now is that he lost his way, and has long since died from starvation.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TULI.

WHAT IS LIFE? A MIRROR, LAKE, OR MIRAGE?

From 1st to 14th August, 1891.

WHAT is life? Is it a “tangled skein”? an “intricate web”? “a great school”? or a “jest”? and a “difficult riddle”? and is human nature “a most pitiful bundle of rags and scraps, which the gods threw out of heaven as the dust and rubbish there”?

Do not imagine that my motives for asking are either priggish or presumptuous, when I tell you that I am on the search for information that no one can give me. At the most we can only conjecture, and even science, with all its patient research, is not infallible, for the basis of most of its arguments is, when all is said and done, hypothesis and supposition.

And yet, though conjecture is mere idle speculation and vanity, if it does nothing else, it softens the hard reality of Time, and makes it pass all the quicker and more agreeably. So, looked at in this light, we can scarcely call it idleness.

As my silent, and all the more pleasant, companion, Bulwer Lytton, says, “The glass of life is the best book, and one’s natural wit the only diamond that can write legibly on it.” This is true, no doubt, and very expressive, but the latter is more expressive than true, I should say.

Life is a glass, a mirror more correctly, and is undoubtedly the best book that we can study. But wit is only natural to the minority, and the majority are left out in the cold; and though this is a trifle severe on them, and wit may be, as some consider, indispensable, and the man without it incomplete, yet such is the case, and nothing that we can do will alter it.

Personally, to me life is a mirror which I like to look into—and I am constantly looking into it—not to see myself, but others.

Or, to use an apter simile, it is a great lake, whose waters are clear and limpid, but so deep that, though you can see a

long way down, there is no getting to the bottom of it, for beyond a certain depth it is a blank! And this is one of the great virtues of the lake. It is a natural mirror, and yet you do not see self. Self, for the time being, is obliterated. But you see far more, and what you see repays you for looking. A living panorama of humanity, from the idiot to the genius, and from the puppet to the showman—a vanity fair, a vanity dark, in fact a veritable vanity of vanities!

Pope has always struck me as being something more than an elegant rhymer, as a thinker of shrewd and sensible ideas.

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

And he is right, for if he had not said so about 200 years ago, I feel sure that I should; as, however, he forestalled me, I can only agree with him, and I do most thoroughly.

What deeper study can you have, and what more pleasing and interesting? Yet how shallow and repulsive at times! But this it is that makes it all the more interesting and instructive.

Even as humanity itself is made up of grain and chaff, wine and dregs, so is Human Nature—one half good, the other bad, one moiety serious, the other frivolous, and so on, ingredients innumerable, proportions variable! and it has many shallows and quicksands spread over it.

Still, it is our legitimate study, and the more we look at the other side of the picture—our inhumanity—see to and rectify it, the better. Were we to put the two into the balance of Nature, if anything, inhumanity would lower the scale, for even in the very core and centre of civilisation it teems. And even here in this tiny hive, hidden away in the vast wilderness of Nature, we have it. Not open brutality and cruelty, but disguised as friendship, which is worse. Better an open enemy any day, than a lurking, treacherous foe—lurking with a smile on his face, insidious flattery on his tongue, and bitter venom in his heart, the venom of slander! For if we have any divinity in our humanity, then slander is inhumanity of the worst description.

There are many such in this vanity of vanities. Birds of a gay—the gayest—plumage. Snakes of the most brilliant hue, concealing their true intentions in an outward fascination. Scorpions, likewise insinuating, and various other reptilia equally so, with stings in their tails, and, small a fraction as we are, according to the Rule of Three and the Law of Ratio and Proportion, we have our little share!

And yet again, life has another and a more serious aspect, and to me it is frequently like a mirage, which, do or go how you please, never gets any nearer. In fact, the more you do or the further you go, the less you achieve, and the farther off it appears, vague, shadowy, topsy-turvy, and irritating, while experience alone teaches us that pursuit of it is vain and useless.

A waste of vital power! A suicide of invaluable time! But needless to tell you that I am alluding here to the mystery of life, and not to the actual realities of this phase of our existence!

Certainly there is much topsy-turvydom in our little lives, and this moral outburst has been evoked by certain incidents that have occurred in one of them, and by the following fact, set down in my diary on the 2nd : "Weil, Homan, Miller, and Powell dined with us, and the latter entertained us with some card tricks, but better still, with reminiscences of his short and merry, but foolish and reckless, career ; and according to his own account, it was not £180,000 but £80,000 that he ran through in six months. It appears, however, that he made another £40,000 at baccarat, but lost it all again, and all this in a few months."

Powell, you may remember, I told you was originally an officer in the 11th Hussars, and until quite recently a trooper under me, but on account of indifferent health, I gave him his discharge, and he has now blossomed into a counter-jumper in Homan's store, and developed into an excellent salesman, almost to the manner born in fact, selling the vilest scents, each time at an increased rate, and with quite a gusto, to the thirsty natives, who gulp it down with a gusto quite as genuine, and get drunk on it! It is amusing, but, on reflection, sad to think how unfair and unequal is the distribution of this world's goods, and yet there is no remedy, not even in "social" or "nihil"- "isms," that I can see, can you ?

The English mail arrived in Macloutsie yesterday, the best on record so far, and if we only had two carts running between here and there, instead of one, it would have been here now, but as our only cart left here yesterday morning, we cannot, at the earliest, expect it back before to-morrow.

For the past two months the B.T.A. service to Macloutsie has been improving, especially very recently : but this is easily accounted for by the fact of Zeederberg's threatened opposition through Pietersberg, as well as to the report that he is doing his utmost to get the mail contract. A good many of

the Company's officials are in his favour, Jameson, I believe, among the number ; but Sir Henry Loch, I hear, is opposed to it, on political and financial grounds of course, and because Bechuanaland and Cape Colony would lose the twopence on each letter passing through.

Zeederberg has also offered to take the mail contract, from here up to Victoria, for £2000 a year, a very reasonable offer, I consider, in the face of numerous difficulties, including horse sickness, which is the worst of all. Yet somehow or other the authorities are wavering and hesitating over it in the most unaccountable manner, and even Jameson would not give him a decided answer.

I am surprised at this, because usually he is very clear-headed and sensible, and, after all, this only resolves itself into a question of common sense and a simple calculation, for the figures are very easily and very quickly worked out. But the older I grow, the more convinced I get that so-called "common sense" is as "uncommon" as a so-called freak of Nature. For though Nature is said to abound in freaks—a term that science very reasonably objects to—there is no such thing, except in that portion of it that we call humanity, which is full of them, and among which I should be inclined to include the sense called "common."

The advantages that would accrue to everybody, and therefore in a correspondingly greater degree to the Company itself, are palpable, and would be well worth the outlay, and yet, because this is a paltry £2000, they cannot make up their great minds over it, though hitherto they have literally thrown away thousands on nothing. Not that I put this forward as an argument in favour of further extravagance.

Tye, their confidant and know-all, tells me that Rhodes and Jameson are opposed to the scheme, on the grounds that the wire will be opened to Victoria before the rains, and that they do not care a rap about letters reaching or not. This is, I say, simply cut-throat policy ; and what about the passengers who would come into the country by coach, but not otherwise ?

There are now some 2000 people in Mashonaland, many of whom are representing business firms and syndicates, who would naturally want to correspond on certain questions which they would like to keep to themselves (to say nothing of the publicity and expense of the wire), besides the numbers of those desirous of keeping in touch with friends and relatives. These are the people who are making the country for Rhodes,

Jameson & Co., and if any one has a right to be considered, they have, and it seems most unwise not to do so.

According to Tye, Jameson said to him, "Send me my papers, if you can; d—n the letters!" Selfish and narrow policy, is all I can say, and, even with my diminished estimate of him, I can scarcely believe it. Since writing this, I have had another talk with Tye on the subject, and he says that Jameson personally is in favour of Zeederberg and his scheme, but that Rhodes is opposed to it; and he agrees with me that it would be a saving to the Company of £500 a year at least, besides the worry, trouble, and anxiety, and that Zeederberg has also offered to put ponts on the rivers, and so render the road passable.

The contradictoriness of the Prince's information can be easily accounted for, and there is more method in it than you think; so he doles it out with a niggard and crafty hand, as a trader barters with the naked savage!

Gifford, who is on his way to Salisbury, and Sieveking, our new doctor, arrived to-day, the 5th, and the former tells me that the detention of our up mails at Mafeking, has been done away with, which accounts for our getting the mails at Macloutsie so soon this week. And in reply to my question, "How do you intend getting the mails across the rivers this wet season?" he said, "We are altering the road and coming round the head of the Notwanie, and not across it, which is about the only serious obstruction in the rains." So at last the B.T.A. seem to be awaking from their long torpor, and all because competition has stimulated them with the spirit of emulation and rivalry.

I have heard from Rees, Willoughby's spy, by the Pietersberg coach, and as he seems to be growing heartily sick of his secret mission and forced inaction, and wishes to return to his police duties once more, besides the fact of his being of no earthly use where he is, I have written to tell him to come back at once.

Since Hayman's little lesson, the Pungwe route is open to a certain extent, and in a kind of a sort of a way, in so far that the valiant and excitable Portuguese, having whetted his martial appetite, has no wish to fight any more, and has promised to be a good boy and not to obstruct for the future! No doubt he will keep his word, so far as only to obstruct passively, which, of the two, is worse than open obstruction. And this is what I am afraid we may expect.

Gifford left for Salisbury on the 8th, and a tall, red-bearded man, a doctor by profession, so he says, came and asked me if he could build a hut and practise here. I gave him leave to do so, and pointed out a building site beyond Conrath's billiard-room. So we progress, step by step, towards improvement, and yet it is a curious choice to make, even for a man on his beam-ends, isn't it? But I have long since come to the conclusion, that the making of a new country is a curiosity altogether, and the human curios that help to make it, as an experience, are unique. Not to be met with elsewhere; for novelty and gold combined seem to draw all mixtures and extremes, from every hole and corner of the uttermost parts of the earth—and the cry is, "Still they come, they come!"

To me everything seems to point to an early, or at all events to an earlier rainy season than last, and during my ride this afternoon, I noticed that the grass was growing well, especially in those parts that have been burnt, where it was from six to seven inches long. Is this, and the fact that for the past few days the frogs have been making vigorous music, a sign of approaching wet weather, or is it only vulgar coincidence?

The veldt has been burning all round us for some time past, and an extensive fire, to the north-east, has been raging all day, and looking at it now, in the prevailing gloom of black night, there is a wild and joyous magnificence about it that I have never seen in the finest illumination. A joyousness of untrammelled freedom, the freedom of great and unconfined Nature, running its fierce and riotous course, hand in hand with the mighty wind, which bloweth when and where it listeth. In comparison to which, man's puny efforts at a blaze sink into mere insignificance. But to compare the artificial to the natural is scarcely right, when we consider that the one is, after all, a base imitation of the other.

A telegram from Rhodes was received yesterday afternoon, just as Goold Adams was riding in from the drifts, ordering the withdrawal of the B.B.P. from here and from Rhodes' Drift on being relieved by us, and in compliance with the order, Crichton-Browne and his detachment left here at 4 p.m., and to-morrow I am sending down Sergeant Robertson with a small party to relieve Laurie.

Campbell, the personification of restless energy, and the *beau ideal* of a bold and go-ahead pioneer, seems bent on carving his way to fortune through the baser and more material

appetites of his fellow-creatures, and is building a store and an inn at Ipagee.

What a mutual opening is here, to be sure ! A timely inn for lated and belated travellers, in which to take their ease, and be taken in their ease ; and for Campbell, mine inn for ease, and mine inn for gold. Yet with these splendid prospects of gold mine, ease, and all, Campbell is evidently very uneasy in his mind. And he came in all the way on purpose to tell me that two Matabele indunas, purporting to come from Lobengula, told him that the king had sent word that the white men were to stop building in his country. But on my pointing out to him that Loben would have acted in a more official way by sending his envoys to me through Moffatt —therefore it was clear that these men were impudent upstarts, who were spying out the land, and thought it an excellent opportunity to take a rise out of the white man—he has returned to Ipagee, reassured, with the intention of pushing on operations with renewed vigour.

If it is true that the warmest welcome is to be found at an inn, or that, as good old Samuel Johnson said, “there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn,” then our good friend Campbell deserves well of the men who, like himself, are making Mashonaland.

Romilly, who passed through here some weeks ago, has returned from Victoria, and came in here to-day. With him our oily *friend* Jerome, Secretary of the Mashonaland Agricultural and Supply Syndicate, and Tabiteau, who went up with the pioneers as doctor, very ill with fever, and looking terribly pulled down. It appears that with 3000 lbs. on the waggon (Romilly's) they have been only 8½ days trekking from Victoria. Rather too rapid for the oxen, considering the dryness of the veldt at the present time, I should imagine !

Goddy has ridden in from the middle drift, and Raaf, a Natal Boer in our employ, from Rhodes' Drift.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TULI.

OIL AND WATER WILL NOT MIX.

From August 15th to 21st, 1891.

NO system of barometry or telephony can, in any way, approach in accuracy the mental—in other words, the natural; and when I saw Jerome return, and heard his plausible excuses poured out unasked, my previous misgiving grew into a fear that something was wrong. Excuses, as a rule, are, more or less—usually more—vain, empty, and frivolous—an immoral refuge for the weak and destitute; so I tackled him in my usually impulsive way, but it was no use. Oil and water will not mix; but oil, even in a storm, when poured on the troubled waters, has the effect of assuaging them. Yet, in spite of his explanation that Ferreira's cattle, being done up, are resting, and that, to make good use of the time, he has come back with a waggon (bought for the Syndicate) to take up a load, I am not satisfied. But what can I say when he says that it will be £60 in our pockets, for he has already secured a load on those terms from Tye. Yet my mind “is troubled with thick-coming fancies”; but, unlike Lady Macbeth, they do not disturb my rest.

Romilly gives us a most dismal account of the existing state of the veldt, and of the condition of oxen, horses, and mules on the road, which, if it is not exaggerated, is very alarming, to say the least of it. According to him, nearly every transport rider, and every party on the road between here and Victoria, have found the greatest difficulty in getting to the latter place. Even Beit and Lord Randolph, whose outfits are specially well turned out, have only just managed to struggle in, the former having lost all his horses and some mules, the latter half his horses (five or six) and a few mules; while all their oxen are frightfully poor and knocked up, and quite unable to proceed beyond Victoria for the present. To improve matters, the grass—what there is of it, and dry at that, still, better than none at all—on both sides of the road has been burnt, by

order of that idiot Harris. I am quoting Romilly's own words. If you ask, Was it for better or for worse? who will not say the latter? This is far from a healthy outlook, still I have, as I said before, great hopes of early rains, and already the young grass is growing up well.

The news from Victoria is quiet, and the report there is that Selous, who has been for some few weeks engaged in making the road to Pungwe Bay, has been recalled to Salisbury, and that he is to be sent to the Zambesi, first of all to find out if it is navigable, and next to see if it is possible to construct a road from Salisbury to a point distant 120 miles from its mouth.

This morning Sergeant Fitzgerald came to me and said that a transport rider wanted to see me. On my requesting that he might be shewn in, he ushered in a big, dirty, bushy-bearded Boer, who could not speak a word of English. To make a long story short, he had come to complain to the commandant, who, in the eyes of the Boer, is everybody rolled into one, and his complaint was this :

Some weeks back he and several other Dutchmen had made a contract with the commissariat officer here, to carry up certain goods to Salisbury at a certain rate. They had just returned from having carried out their agreement, but that payment had been made to them at a lower rate; they were not at all satisfied, and wanted the money that had been promised to them.

In reply, I expressed my great regret at my utter inability to help them, and referred him and his comrades to the magistrate, who is one and the same person with the senior commissariat officer—the identical individual who made the contract. Now will anything that I can say better shew up the immorality of Tye's appointment, than this little chance coincidence?

What satisfaction the men got I do not know, for I have neither heard nor have I asked, as I avoid inquisitive interference on principle; but if the fact mentioned does not shew which way the wind is blowing, then all I can say is, that the wind, like most things in Africa, is irresponsible for its actions. It is quite possible, of course, that these transport riders have had to pay for loss or damage of goods, and that their grievance is entirely imaginary; but in any case, and on principle, no commissariat officer should combine the office of magistrate with his own, for it is scarcely within the bounds of human nature that a man should sit in judgment on himself! And heaven alone knows how full of vents and loopholes is this

self-same nature of ours, without adding any more to it of an artificial make ! To use the ordinary phraseology of every-day life, why put temptation in a man's way, when it is easy enough for him to fall, without going out of the way for it ! All I know is, that, in the Service, after an experience of over 200 years, such things are never done—and wise precaution. On no account whatever is a commissariat officer allowed to act as paymaster.

Outside news here is, as it invariably is, stale and unprofitable. We are out of the world of the busy hive of business with its perpetual hum, though in actual contact with it by means of the mighty electrical agency, and through the weekly post which is now running fairly up to time, so that our European and general news, though second-hand, is up-to-date. We are also a long way off, and quite outside the little world of Mashonaland. In fact we are a great deal further off it than you good folks at home are.

Whether it is that no progress has been made, and that development is at a standstill, owing to the great difficulties in opening up the Pungwe—the cheaper and the shorter—route, or that the deep and wily Mashona-ites wish to keep things dark and quite to themselves, or yet again that they have nothing to keep, I cannot say. But we certainly never have a line from any source, regarding what has been or not been done, and what is doing. A sorry state of affairs truly, for light is ever preferable to darkness. I am sorry indeed to hear of poor —'s death, and very much surprised at what you have told me. Whatever conflicting and variable opinion may say of self-murder—that from a legal standpoint it is a crime due to madness; or regarded morally is an act of cowardice or bravery, hastened by various human causes when in a state of temporary insanity—it is unnatural, whether inflicted or not during mental derangement, or aberration of the intellect. And the question very naturally arises, What effect will it have on the existence to come ? Any interference with the laws of Nature is unnatural. And just as it is unwise to force or to check natural growth, although the attempt may partially succeed, it cannot be either as wholesome or as vigorous, and therefore neither complete nor entire, for though Nature may be improved (?) in a certain sense and to a certain extent, and cultivated to an excess by so-called artificial means—which after all are her own, the utilising of her own inspiration, through human agency, the higher part of herself, so as to conduce to the improvement of other and lower functions, in other words, a kind of reciprocal action—she cannot be developed or thwarted by undue pressure to a

successful, or to the same issue, as if, or when left alone, to work out her own laws !

And so I think, in this plain and practical sense alone, we ought not, in any one single way, to interfere with the *modus operandi* of our life, but let it run its own course in its own way, long or short, straight or crooked, pleasant or wearisome, as it may be !

That any such interference on our part may be fraught with fearful consequences, is admissible and possible. At all events, who is it that knows to the contrary, or to what it may lead ? and discretion, if not the better, is the wiser part. On this account, if for no other, we should, I think, leave well alone.

But there's the rub again ! Do what we will, and say what we will, men will murder self, and nothing that we can say or do will ever stop them. That what we call temporary insanity is nothing more or less than the total subjugation—may be extinction, for the time being—of reason by feeling is, I think, allowable. For feeling, once carried away by its own overwhelming flood-tide of passion or impulse, will dare and do anything, and though

“Thought may be deeper than all speech,

Feeling is deeper”—and manifestly stronger—“than all thought.”

And yet science sneers at this same feeling, and calls it but a material sentiment, when it is everything, and will rise to the sublimity of self-extinction or sacrifice ! A sublimity attained by the Man of Sorrows when He died on the cross, for there seems no doubt that, in a moral sense, He gave up His life, in the firm belief that the salvation of the world depended on it.

Verily this life of ours, with all its comedies and tragedies, is a mystery, though only a probation, and a mere nothing in comparison to the deeper mystery of the life beyond and beyond. Each one of us in turn will solve the problem and fathom its deepest depths when the time comes, but let us hope it is a long way off as yet for most of us. Speaking for myself, I find this world quite pleasant enough, while there is no knowing what the next, and the next after that, may be like. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. To anticipate you, total and final extinction—never, never, never ! Feeling again, I admit, because reason, with all its casuistry and logic, flies the field at her approach.

I have been down to Rhodes' Drift and back, riding down there yesterday and returning this afternoon. On my way I met the Pietersburg coach with Zeederberg in it, beyond the first outspan, where Krief, a Boer, with his family, are located.

In the evening I dined with Laurie, and met Dettelbach, who is still staying at Morrison's hotel, near the pont crossing, and on the Transvaal side. This morning I took over all the camp equipment from Laurie, and we then strolled down, and looked up Raaf at his encampment, which stands under the shade of a particularly grand old tree. A few yards from here are Commandant Meyer's waggons, and accompanied by Raaf we walked over and had a chat with him. Like the tree close by, I found him a grand old man, who though over sixty, is hale, hearty, and vigorous, but unfortunately confined to his waggon just now from a broken leg. Strolling on down to the drift, we found a large herd of oxen drinking in the river, forming with their surroundings quite a picturesque effect.

Raaf, for a Dutchman, is small, but a very good little fellow, who has rendered most excellent service in all the wars that have taken place in South Africa during the last twenty years, so much so that after the Zulu war, a C.M.G. was conferred on him.

In connection with this, I have heard an anecdote which, although it might strike us in a comico-snobbish light, is nothing of the sort, but merely serves to illustrate the crude but serious simplicity of the Boer.

Raaf, at the time in question, was a butcher by trade, which he carried on in Maritzburg, where he had a shop, and it appears that when he had received this mark of H.M.'s approbation, he was so elated that a new sign-board was put up, on which Raaf, C.M.G. (in large letters), Butcher, appeared.

On my return here, I found a Mr. Laurence Van der Byl, with several waggons and a party of thirty-five strapping young fellows, principally Colonials, who have received special terms from the Company, and who are going up to form a large farming settlement, on co-operative principles. Of course, out-fits such as Lord Randolph's are by no means to be despised, for besides bringing a certain number and amount of people and money into the country, and giving it at least a temporary prestige, they may, or of course may not, have a far-reaching effect in time to come. But this is the class of expedition, and these are the kind of men we want up here. Men of stamina who understand and like the work, who will settle in the country for life and make it, if it is to be made.

I have not for a moment lost sight of the fact that to support the farmer a large population is necessary, and to maintain this the supply of gold must be, if not inexhaustible, sufficient, at all events, to tide over the next twenty years at the very least, when, from all accounts, the country should

become self-supporting. For I see no reason to doubt why it should not blossom into the granary of South Africa, for, with a natural outlet like Beira, there ought to be no difficulty in supplying the Natal and Cape markets at a rate cheap enough to cut out Australian produce. This, however, is a question that can be dealt with when the time comes; at present all our energies are required for the development of the gold industry. The only way to do this will be to facilitate means of communication into the country, and to cheapen transport, and there is only one way to do this, and that is to copy the Americans and build railways. With a man like Rhodes at the head of affairs, little time, we may be sure, will be lost, for if anyone can see ahead, and recognise the necessity of immediate and rapid action, he can.

Mr. Van der Byl is a well-known member of an old and well-known family at Cape Town, and the encouragement Mr. Rhodes is giving him, as well as to the Dutch delegates, who have come up at his express invitation, free of expense, to report upon the farming capabilities of Mashonaland, is an earnest of his liberal, advanced, and prudent policy. Only to be expected, however, from a man of many ideas, keen perspicacity, and vigorous energy, such as he.

Mr. Laurence Van der Byl is an uncle of the two youngsters who are in D troop, and, although he is no longer a young man, he is a hale and hearty specimen of a vigorous race, and in spirits and hopefulness as young as the youngest of his party.

18th. Another Sitwell-Matabele scare on, and the following wire has reached me from Macloutsie: "18th inst. Sub-Lieut. Ellis reports from Tati, 17th, that, on 12th inst., Moffatt, Tainton, Fairburn, Acutt, Reilly, and Farley were summoned before Lobengula and a council of twenty-three, to answer charges brought by Carl Kumalo(s) and John Makunga, who arrived on Saturday night, 8th inst., from Hassforther, complaining of stoppage of Hassforther and Rennie Tailyour. Moffatt sentenced to go down country to fetch in Tailyour and Hassforther, that they may speak for themselves. Moffatt told the king that he could not bring them in, and that he was being driven out of the country. Ellis further reports good position at Tati, on two kopjes commanding river. Fort could be easily built. Five hundred cattle at Tati. Not much grain. Store fairly well stocked. Place quiet. Lobengula will have heard of Ellis's arrival at Tati to-day."

August 19th.—This morning I received a telegram from Carrington to arrest Rennie Tailyour and Hassforther at

all hazards, and not to allow them to pass in to Buluwayo, and informing me that he was putting a stop to all men of the B.B.P., and shortly after he sent another to Goold Adams to return to Macloutsie, withdraw B.B.P. from all drifts, keep in touch with Khama, and get all the information he can.

It is quite evident from this that Carrington considers the political outlook at Buluwayo shaky, but I do not place very much reliance on it after all, because his proclivities are decidedly bellicose, and while he is spoiling for a fight with any one, he is boiling over for one with the Matabele!

This is Sitwell's third scare, but it is not quite so barefaced as his former, which evolved out of second-hand information received from a telegraph clerk, and he has some basis to go on, unless Ellis has been drawn. Seemingly there is something unusual up, and Hepburn's reply to my wire explains matters to a certain extent. He wires, "Matabele army from Zambesi returned, but many sick with fever. Express messengers left for Moffatt. Khama has already given full instructions to guard Tuli, to men living round district. Any movement on part of Matabele will be given to the camp at once by them. The chief will now send out scouts direct to Shashi River from here. You may rely upon hearing of any movement in your direction without delay. The chief will report any reliable news at once to you."

Once more, and for the sixth time, the cry of wolf, and it is this return of the impis from the north that has given rise to uneasy rumours. As to Moffatt being ordered out of the country, I do not for a moment believe it.

Hepburn again wires me, that Khama sent scouts last night off to Makalaka towns, that he is also placing men on Shashi West, and taking every precaution to prevent any surprise on our camp. Romilly, Du Cane, and Jerome returned to-day (20th) to Victoria, with the intention of going on to Salisbury. Goold Adams returned from Masebis (21st). Got him to wire, asking Sitwell, Ellis's source of information about Moffatt. Sitwell replied from Sam Edwards, who shewed Ellis Moffatt's letter, which has since been confirmed by Moffatt's telegram to Sir Henry Loch. It has been raining pretty steadily all night and up to 11 a.m., and the sky looks as if we were going to have some more, but this will scarcely satisfy the music-making froggies, who have been entertaining us to nightly concerts for the past fortnight. Sieveking, our new doctor, has been down to Rhodes' Drift to see Commandant Meyers, and has returned, having done all he could for him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TULI.

DRINK AND ITS EVIL EFFECTS.

From 22nd to 31st August, 1891.

I AM not going to give you a lecture on drink and its evil effects, for one reason because I am in no mood to moralise, and for another still better, because I feel that it is either too high or too deep.

That it must be a disease, a mental tendency, inherent and transmitted from generation to generation, seems to me to be a very logical and reasonable theory. Otherwise, how is it possible to account for a mere boy of nineteen, a fine strapping young fellow over six feet high, bright, intelligent, and smart, being down with D.T. in a few weeks, and all since that canteen of Homan's was opened, a month ago to-day? This is the second case, but the other happens to be a hardened old toper, that I have not the same sympathy for.

I do not know whether to feel a great pity for the foibles of sad, suffering humanity, tempted at every step, even in this overgrown wilderness of weed and foliage, or to curse the canteen with its liquid fire and distilled damnation, for adding another temptation, and a curse which, up to the present, we have done so well without, to ensnare the fool who is weak enough to fall into it? Or, to do both—cursing first and pitying after.

I am so sorry for —, who was one of the most promising youngsters brought up by White, that I feel, if I once began, my feelings would carry me away on a torrent of oaths, sweeping everything but the canteen before them. So, on second thoughts, I mean to spare my curses and indulge in pity. The worst part of it all is that there is no use talking to a man in this condition, though I mean to do so when he is all right; but what annoys me more than anything is that, though the lad was one of the provost, and in constant contact with officers and non-commissioned, not a soul noticed that he was drinking. And it was not until yesterday, when he ran amuck

with a drawn sword along the road, that it all came out, and I placed him under Sieveking's eye, who tells me that he is suffering from D.T.

Goold Adams left this afternoon to assume command of the B.B.P. at Macloutsie. Socially he will be a very great loss to us, although he has been down far more at the drifts than here; still I have seen quite enough of him to make me wish to see more.

24th. Yesterday afternoon I had a more interesting ride than usual, so I must tell you all about it. It was reported to me that two rifles belonging to the commissariat department had been stolen by a native boy in our service, and sold to the Makalakas, living in two villages on the east bank of the Shashi. The first of these is about three miles up, and the other nearly five. At midday I sent a dozen men, under Corporal Reed, to prevent the people from leaving the villages, and at 2.30 p.m. Sieveking and myself rode out, getting to the first in half an hour. The chief, an insignificant, dirty-looking little creature, denied all knowledge of the business, so I ordered a thorough search to be made. Riding on to the next we went through the same performance, but failed to unearth the missing rifles.

Anything like the way in which these villages are hidden, I have never seen, and for a stranger finding himself in the vicinity, it would be almost impossible to find them unless the people shewed themselves, or betrayed the presence of their locations by the greyish smoke wreathing and curling upwards above the dense green foliage. For the villages are hidden away in almost impenetrable thickets, the approaches to which are a natural maze.

Our reputation for justice and clemency has evidently impressed them, as they did not shew the slightest fear, or even concern, at our entering and searching their huts. Nor did they seem in the least annoyed when we disturbed their household gods and goods, which were very meagre and scanty, though as they were not over clean, they excited a certain amount of repugnance on our part. What made it worse is the fact of the huts being so small and low, with only one small hole for ingress and egress, through which we had to crawl on our hands and kness.

The walls of the huts are made of wattle, plastered with daager—a mixture of cow-dung and earth, and the roofs are thatched with grass. There being no hole for the smoke to escape, the insides are smoked and sooty, and altogether stuffy

and unpleasant. Some of them are very rudely put together, while in others the neatness and solidity of construction were quite noticeable—not entirely due to individual characteristics, however, but to the fact of the owner being in a more substantial position, and having more wives and dependents belonging to him. This was especially noticeable in the chief's houses, which were larger, better built, and cleaner, though this will not convey to you any idea of what the people are really or actually like.

A low type of miserable humanity—physically, morally, and mentally low—possessing little of this world's goods, and apparently quite satisfied by their good fortune in having even a little. For that they live in daily or hourly fear of their lives from the Matabele, is plainly seen in the scared and hunted look on their faces, and yet they have not even the courage to get out of their reach and go into safety.

There were very few men about, as most of them, I believe, at this time of the year, are away in the colony working in the mines. To compensate for their absence the women turned out *en masse*, and a lovely collection of old hags and beldames they were. Wrinkled, withered witches, with features resembling nearly every simian specimen under the sun, they looked for all the world exactly like monkeys as they sprawled about in the shade, or crawled in and out of their grimy hives—a study replete with instruction, a practical lesson in evolution, and a sight that Darwin would have simply revelled in.

Motley is the only word for them, for the qualities and elements displayed in their features, gestures, and movements, were more diverse than I can say or find a comparison for, yet tending in the one direction, and pointing to the same source.

Even the young women are as ugly as sin, especially the married ones, who wear a kind of very short kirtle, or kilt, of leather, which is slit up all round into thin strips like a fringe. Indeed, in the two villages I only saw two who would have passed muster in an ordinary crowd. One was a young girl of about fourteen, just budding into womanhood, and the other a tall, fine-looking woman of sixteen or seventeen, with limbs and a bust splendid enough for a sculptor to model. In fact, they looked quite out of keeping with their surroundings, and as if they belonged to a race of a higher order of intelligence.

Neither men nor women in these parts are troubled by tailors' and milliners' bills, which amount in the year to no

more than the cost of a piece or two of Manchester cotton for the former, and a few strings of beads or coils of wire and brass, out of which they make armlets and anklets, with which they literally smother themselves from head to foot.

The unmarried girls have evidently to go without kirtle or beads, which seem to be the insignia of the married state; so they walk about with all the liberty and comeliness of beauty unadorned, and have very much the best of it. And as the shades of evening fell upon us, bathed in all the splendour of a many and lovely tinted after-glow, we returned to camp unsuccessful yet interested.

Flowers with his detachment has come in this morning (27th) from the drifts, and young Shepstone, a lieutenant in D troop, who arrived from up country a day or two ago, has left for King's Kraal, Swazieland, on four months' leave, to count on his leaving Tuli, so that in reality he will be away six months. This, too, after the recent order that only six weeks' leave in the year was to be given to any member of the police. Oh, the glorious inconsistency of this Company and its officials. If it has no worse effect, it certainly does vary the monotony of our life up here, which is something gained, is it not, and that is more than can be advanced for inconsistency in general.

I have once before alluded to Bulwer Lytton's sarcastic description of human nature as a most pitiful bundle of rags and scraps thrown out of Olympus as dust and rubbish. I have come to the conclusion that he spoke very much to the point, notwithstanding that from amongst the dirt-heap it is quite possible to find a solitary speck of gold that shines out of its grimy surroundings, like the sun when it bursts from the gloom of clouded space in all the glory of its splendour, lighting up infinity with the radiancy of its glow.

I have had during the past year quite a large experience of this same human nature, in the deep mourning garb of bereaved parents mourning for their lost ones. In this way a curious chapter has been opened to me in the form of hard, cold business letters, enquiring not for the poor devil who is dead, his manner of death, or the tenor of his last thoughts, but merely asking me to forward his effects or any money that he has left.

And out of the number that I have received, only one was from a mother, whose love for her erring prodigal was life itself, every word of her letter breathing with a poetry of intense, unselfish purity, and a deep and solemn anxiety for

his future that was too touching for words and too sacred to be spoken about.

We heard some time ago that Rhodes was coming up to Mashonaland *via* Tuli, and early this morning (28th) Lange and Tyson arrived as an advanced guard, with two light travelling waggons belonging to him, and with them is a brother of Doctor Jameson's. He lives in Paris, and calls himself an artist, and in the accepted sense he may be, but in the true sense never. A painter of daubs and base imitations, doubtless, but without soul or eye, and devoid of ideas ; in his hands art would have a sorry time of it.

Colquhoun, who left Salisbury on the 6th inst., arrived here to-day (29th) by post-cart, and tells me that he is going down country to see Rhodes, and then on leave ; but from all accounts, this is only pending resignation, as I have reasons to believe that Jameson has effected his object. So we may expect to hear of him as Administrator, when Rhodes comes up.

I had quite a brisk and exciting drive this afternoon, with Lange and Curtain, in Rhodes' Cape cart, behind an untrained team of four horses, who took an hour to start, then raced off as if the devil was after them. After we had gone about four miles, Lange, who was driving, stopped to give them a breather, and this meant another business in restarting them. However, we got off again after a bit of coaxing, but on our return journey we backed into a big bush, and were hung up for nearly twenty minutes before we extricated ourselves. Then we raced up a big steep hill, about three miles from the fort, and just as we were within an ace of the top, the near leader fell, but although he recovered himself quickly, we ran backwards until we got to the bottom again, luckily, however, without turning over. After two more futile efforts, we succeeded in getting to the top, and then home without further trouble, as the hill had taken it out of the horses and quieted them down.

Sieveking, whom I have only casually referred to, I find is a kindred spirit and most charming companion. Most amusing and full of humour, he keeps me alive with his genuine fun and true wit. I tell him he has mistaken his profession, or rather is a good actor lost to the world of art, but not to his friends. For, as a doctor, he is very clever, earnest, and pains-taking, full of energy, and always at work. There was no hospital to speak of until he came, but he has lost no time in having an excellent one built, while all his arrangements are as perfect as possible! It is great fun to see him take off people, and he has the measure of the "Princely One" to perfection.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TULI.

FYFE SCOTT ARRIVES VIA TETTE AND THE ZAMBESI.

From September 1st to September 20th, 1891.

THIS is going to be an effort in the true, as well as every other sense, as I feel in no humour for writing, so with your usual broad-mindedness, I will expect you to make every allowance! Fyfe Scott, a corporal in B troop, has arrived here from Cape Town, and tells me that he has come round from Salisbury *via* Tette and the east coast. The distance between the two places, according to the route traversed by him, is 367 miles.

Fifteen miles from Salisbury, the head valleys that drain into the Mazoe river are reached. From this point the road descends rapidly for about 500 feet from the plain on which Mount Hampden is situated, and from thence the country, as far as Tette, consists of one continued, broken plain, sloping to north and east, intersected by undulating hills and saddle-backed mountains, and drained by innumerable streams, spruits, and large rivers. In the valleys the soil is often very rich, and the slopes of the hills are thickly covered with mahoboha trees, or by grass that reaches to a height of ten feet.

The country, about 150 to 200 miles from Salisbury, is thickly populated, and continues so as far as the Ruia river, and the natives obtain rich crops from their rudely cultivated fields. From the north side of this river, right up to Tette, the country becomes more sandy, water being somewhat scarce, and it is covered with thick thorn bush, the native paths leading along the beds of dry sand rivers.

At Tette, the Zambesi is about 1000 yards wide, and boats drawing three feet of water come there from Vicenti in the dry season. Vicenti is a village on the north bank of the Zambesi, about three miles from Mopea, on the Quaqua river, from whence goods coming from Quilimane are carried overland for shipment on the Zambesi.

From Tette, Fyfe Scott went down the river in a boat, with carrying capacity of two and a half tons, not unlike a large

life-boat, with a reed covering in the stern. At Quilimane, he got into a Portuguese steamer, which took him to Delagoa Bay, where he picked up a Castle liner that took him on to Cape Town. He says the Union Line have coasting steamers, which run to Mozambique from Port Elizabeth, but when he was there, owing to the complications, they were not running.

8th. I returned yesterday from the drifts, having ridden a good 200 miles in four days, three and a half hours, and found that Fyfe Scott had already left for Salisbury, Tyson and Lange starting this evening.

To go back. At daybreak on the 3rd, Day, a bright young Capetonian, and myself crossed the Tuli, and headed for Masebi's Drift, and a most enjoyable ride we had, for nothing unusual occurred to disturb its pleasurable harmony, with the exception of a little incident that happened to myself.

Day was behind, with another trooper who was on his way to the drifts, and I was on ahead some two or three miles, all alone, and lost in silent contemplation of certain thoughts that were passing through my head. It was in the afternoon, when the sun was at its hottest. I was riding at a smart canter, and Dandy Dick was as fresh as paint, when, before we knew where we were, we dashed round a corner, and almost into a group of seven full-grown leopards, who were lying, taking it easy, under the shade of a thick, low-spreading mimosa.

It was all so sudden that neither myself nor Dick (who shies terribly as a rule) had time to be frightened, though we were, naturally, somewhat startled, and Dick came to a dead stop, while the beautiful wild cats were up and off into the bush in a flash. Indeed, of the two, they were by far the more startled at the sudden impetuosity of our advent, and although I dismounted, and followed them up for about 200 yards, I saw nothing, but, as the bush was so dense, I made up my mind that it was unwise to go any further, so I turned back. Day and MacIntyre had now come up, so we rode on together, arriving at Masebi's, the first point on the river, with the setting sun.

The fort, a small, open earthwork, horse-shoe shape, stands facing the river—which runs more or less from west to east—at a distance of 1000 yards. At the back, not many hundred yards off, and parallel to the river, is a rocky ridge, and, hidden away in its clefts, is a kraal belonging to Chief Masebi.

The scenery is very pretty here, as the valley opens out, especially on the Transvaal side, and, in the distance, the blue mountains of Zoutspanberg rise majestic over the surrounding

hills, while along the banks of the river the foliage is green and thick. The men here seem comfortable enough in their rough reed huts, and are lucky in having such luxuries as fresh milk and eggs in plenty.

The next morning, as the sun was commencing to gild the summits of the surrounding hills with the gleaming radiancy of his golden light, Day and I were well on our way to the Middle Drift. When we were about seven miles off, where the road overhangs the river, we off-saddled in a charming spot, and had something to eat. At our feet lay the Limpopo, rippling, plashing, gurgling, eddying, and swirling over rocks and boulders, making slow, soft music, that, in the silence prevailing all around us, fell on my ears like a sweet symphony, soothing my senses, and lulling me into a short refreshing sleep that carried me away into the mystic wonderland of so-called dreams.

Vague snatches of memory of a life, shrouded in mysticism unfathomable, behind, beyond and around us ! Mere whispers wafted to us on the magnetic wings of inspiration, lost altogether or confused beyond recognition in transmission, and christened so, for want of a better name !

The banks of the river have a thick fringe of graceful reeds and bulrushes, and long green grass, all bowing, bending, and waving to a gentle breeze with the poetry of bewitching motion, while towering splendid above them are trees, looking noble in their giant loftiness, and in the glorious spread of a great and grateful foliage ! And so on like this road and river run along right into the Middle Drift. Here the valley narrows into a mere strip, the hills rugged and rocky on both sides, running right down to the river, while the view as I looked up its sparkling course, glinting in the noonday sun, was extremely beautiful !

At the Main Drift the scenery undergoes quite a metamorphosis. Climbing to the top of the rocky hill about 400 ft. high, on which the fort is built, the scene one looks upon is wild and grotesque in the extreme, and the view obtainable from it on every side is not only extensive, but curiously grand.

The whole country, as far as the eye can see, is a mass of rocky peaks and ridges, upheavals of a prehistoric volcanic eruption, dotted all over with baobab trees, huge ugly distorted specimens that have remained from time immemorial, as veritable caricatures in the arboreal world of Nature ; and it is this eccentric and unusual combination of rugged upheavals, with these botanical monsters, leafless at this time of the year, and

therefore all the more hideous in their nakedness, that forms such a marked feature of the surrounding scenery, the only feature in fact, wonderfully weird and fantastic in the remarkable variance of its shapes and shadows, yet all the same unique in its general aspect, as an erratic outbreak on the part of the wondrous dame !

Into this strange scene, gliding smoothly and sinuously like a huge silvery serpent, flows the river, with music in its sound and the poetry of life in its motion, flowing onward to fulfil its purpose in the deeper destiny of the blue ocean lying eastward, onward, yet ever onward, in all the silent majesty of power impelled and irresistible, and to the slow and stately living march of gently murmuring waters, and to the soothng of zephyrs stealing softly on sighs and echoes, yet sonorous with the depths and richness of vast infinity.

Meandering along, the river with its silver stream, gleaming in the fervid clasp of the fiery and amorous Sun God, now overhead, glides between a verdant lining of feathery reeds, slight and fragile, and of giant trees massively moulded, that throw sweet shadows like maiden blushes on the mirror-like surface beneath, which is ever moving, yet ever there ! And as, twisting, turning, and winding in its tortuous course, it sweeps through the ghostly country, the contrast between them is as remarkable as it is striking.

The river, suggestive of peace, beauty, and refinement, appears altogether out of place, and as if it had only found its way there by accident, while the surrounding neighbourhood looks like an odd corner of some old-time world, that has been placed here by design, to teach us by comparison a lesson in contentment of the wondrous beauty of the world we live in, as well as to remind us of the unlimited power of Nature to distort and even to destroy ! But in spite of its awful gruesomeness, there was an awe-inspiring mysticism about the scene which threw a glamour over me, that rooted me to the spot, and it was with much reluctance I tore myself away. And oh for the power of living inspiration to reveal to you the mystery of the awe and reluctance that came and went, unsought or unasked ! Turning our heads homeward, we rode hard for the next two days, arriving at Tuli on the morning of the 7th, to find your letter awaiting me !

You say in it, that you are of opinion the railway from Beira will soon be made. I do not think so. The true state of the case is, that our people are beginning to realise the fact that it is not by any means so easy a job to make a road

as in the first rush of novelty and excitement they imagined it would, for I hear that the country through which it is being made is very low and swampy. So I have come to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that communication between Salisbury and Beira will not be established on any regular system before the end of next year, and I am doubtful of it even then. Some slipshod arrangement may be made, by which a certain number of people can get through, but no regular service will be maintained, and certainly not a railway!

For any one who has never been out of England, it is difficult to conceive what travelling in a bullock waggon over South African roads means. A road out here is not like one at home ; metalled, made with culverts and bridges over gullies and water-courses, and constantly kept in repair. On the contrary, in a new district it is invariably the track taken by the first waggon which has simply been driven across the veldt in the required direction ; up or round hills, down dales, and over rivers, ravines, or any obstacles that come in the way ; through the bush, regardless of tears, breakdowns, or smashes, and in utter contempt of small bushes or rocks, totally oblivious, in fact, of all consequences.

Then other waggons come after and follow in the wake of the pioneer, and by very slow degrees, trees that overhang and bushes which are in the way are cut down, leaving ugly stumps from two to three feet high. So it is that the first faint wheel-marks become, in process of time, a well-worn track, and this in its turn becomes a roadway ; but stumps, stones, gullies, water-courses, and rivers still survive, and the bumping, thumping, jolting, rattling, shaking and aching—varied with an occasional upset or collapse, should the obstacles be bad and the driver careless—also remain, always accompanied by dirt, dust, and discomfort indescribable. And yet to me there is a positive charm about the whole thing, peculiarly its own, that I cannot describe to you, and which is altogether inexplicable, unless it is that the catholic luxuriance and freedom of Nature makes ample compensation.

My papers have gone in, by the way, and have been accepted, and Rhodes has given me two months leave pending resignation, so I am off in a few days to Salisbury, and out by Beira home, and you may expect me in about three months. I will write you from Salisbury for certain, and possibly from Victoria if I have time, but it is only a faint possibility, as I intend making a rapid ride, because I want to look up *friends* Jerome and Ferreira.

S——, who passed through here not long ago, spoke very dubiously of them, and especially of the former, who, he tells me, was a choir boy at St. Paul's, and came out to Johannesburg as a hairdresser. During the boom there it appears that he made about £30,000 over shares, but a course of wine and women soon exhausted it, and, finding himself on his beam-ends, he and Ferreira, who is in a similar condition, took up with the trek for want of a better spec. ! And yet with our eyes open we have mixed ourselves up with such men. Verily humanity in its intricacies is very incomprehensible, and the atmosphere of Africa most insinuatingly insidious !

Before closing this, I must tell you that the Reverend Messrs. Hoffmeyr and Stegman arrived here on the 9th inst. from Salisbury, on their way down country, and have stayed a few days to rest, because the latter is ill and knocked up. Socially and intellectually they are both charming, and it is a sincere pleasure to be in contact with such men, and there is not so much of the confined cramp and narrowness of conventionality and dogma about their conversation and actions as I should have expected. On the contrary, the impartiality and breadth of their views quite astonished me. Mr. Hoffmeyr is simply as magnificent a type of muscular and intelligent Christianity as I have ever seen—a big 6 ft. 2 in. of sinew, bone, and muscle, in the full vigour and prime of manhood. Of course I have seen far more of him than Mr. Stegman, and have had long talks about the Matabele and the prospects of Mashonaland.

They have had a good look round the country, and have been to Mazoe, Umfuli, and the Hartley Hills. Though they do not consider it the paradise that some people have represented it to be, they speak well of it on the whole as to the gold outlook, and especially for farming purposes, both agricultural and pastoral, but particularly the latter; and though from what they have seen, there is at present very little land suitable for sheep, their opinion is that much of it which is now unsuitable will become so after it has been grazed by oxen for some years. This, as yet, is the most reliable and authentic information I have heard about Mashonaland. Reliable because unprejudiced, and authentic because, from a farming point, Messrs. Hoffmeyr and Stegman are worthy of consideration.

The former tells me that he saw Colnbrander, who had come in from Buluwayo, at Salisbury, and who spoke of prospects and the political outlook as particularly favourable. He does not anticipate any trouble except perhaps from internal

dissensions. He went on to state that the Indunas of the two impis which had been to the Zambezi, had fallen out on their return journey, resulting in a general scrimmage, and several were killed on both sides. When Lobengula questioned the Indunas, the only answer they gave him, with which, in spite of his wrath, he had to be satisfied, was, they did not know how it was, but that, somehow or other, they had stabbed each other.

The fact that Loben has taken no notice of this is significant, because, a few years ago, it is a circumstance that he would not have brooked for an instant. A sign of growing discontent and waning power, and of the times, no doubt. That the king is in favour of a peaceful attitude towards the white man, but that he has a strong party, consisting of the younger regiments, to keep in check, is evident. And it will take him all his time to prevent disaffection from spreading into open mutiny. Civil war is the best thing that could happen for civilisation and us, for then we would step in, take the country, and settle the question once and for all. But it must be effectual, or there will be no settlement, and the fire will keep on smouldering only to break out afresh.

Before leaving Salisbury Mr. Hoffmeyr informs me that he noticed many Matabele coming in for work, and it struck him that they were most eager to earn money, as they were quite aware of the advantages to be gained from it. Surely a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, for if they only knew of the corresponding disadvantages, and of the curses that follow in its train, would they not recoil from it with greater horror than from the fangs of the deadly mamba* ready to strike? Or would they, like their civilised brethren of the great race of humanity, with all the power of fulness of knowledge, and clearness of mental vision, rush after it all the more madly, and clutch it with all the greater avidity? Only too readily, I ween, for knowledge or no knowledge, the greed, or hunger, for gold is an inherent tendency of the inspiration that is in us.

We have just heard that some Dutchmen, who were out shooting near Umzingwan, found the man who was lost from Mother Patrick's party in an exhausted condition, and bereft of his senses. He was lying in an ant-bear hole, and seemed to have lost all recollection of what had occurred. But the instinct of preservation had remained, and he had kept himself alive on roots, berries, and water, which he was close to. He was doing very well, and his condition improving when last we heard, and the Dutchmen were taking him on to Salisbury.

* "Mamba," a deadly snake.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

VICTORIA.

DAY AND I LEAVE FOR SALISBURY—DUNNE STATES HIS CASE
— PENNEFATHER'S USUAL BLUNDERING WAY — JAMESON'S
USUAL COMMON SENSE — THE MANGWATOS GIVE SMITH
AN UNANSWERABLE ANSWER.

From 21st to 27th September, 1891.

I AM making a halt here of two days, as it is just about half way to Salisbury, and having an hour or two to spare, I place them at your disposal.

On Monday the 21st, at 4.30 in the afternoon, Day and I made a start on No. 16 troop horse and Dandy Dick, plus a pack pony, with our little all, after bidding all hands a hearty farewell. I was genuinely sorry to leave the men, amongst whom I would have willingly remained, for a manlier, finer lot I have never worked with, but the Fates, those callous callants, have willed it otherwise.

We rode out, accompanied by Sieveking, White, and Hicks-Beach, as far as Ipagee, fourteen or fifteen miles on the way, a small running stream, fringed on both sides by a belt of tall trees, and quite a favourite resort of partridge and guinea-fowl. Here friend Campell and his partner Drummond have erected their inn, where shelter for man and horse can be obtained. Though the dinner they provided us was hardly up to amphitryonic form, it was excellent, and all the more so when washed down by copious draughts of delicious laager beer. The company to be met with in our roadside hotels is decidedly mixed, and at Ipagee we found the bibulous old "lady" who arrived in Tuli a few days ago, along with quite a young boy, in the Pietersburg coach. She was suffering from the effects of drink then, and she is still suffering from them. It is pitiable to see a woman dragged to such depths of degradation, and terribly pathetic to contemplate the future of the unfortunate boy, is it not? But such it has been, so it is, and so it will be, in spite of all preaching.

Dunne turned up here on his way down to Kimberley, where he intends procuring a consignment of goods to bring up to Salisbury. He has left the police, and with reference to Hackwell's death told me the following :

"On our way up to Victoria with a convoy in January last, after Turner had gone on with his troop, we were detained at the Lundi for some weeks, and during that time Hackwell got fever. I did all I could for him, which was not much, as I had no means at my disposal, but I put him in my own waggon, and slept on the ground myself, and any report to the contrary is utterly untrue. From ordinary motives of humanity, I would have looked after any one in the same way, but all the more so Hackwell, for whom, as you know, I had the greatest regard and affection, and the whole thing is an absolute lie from beginning to end. However, Pennefather in his usual blundering way would not listen to reason, or a word I had to say, but placed and kept me under arrest until Jameson's arrival in Salisbury towards the end of July. With his usual common sense, he released me, and has offered me compensation in the shape of 10,000 acres of land."

I for one can certainly answer for Dunne's warm-hearted humanity in general, and in particular for his admiration, amounting to friendship, for poor Hackwell, whose loss he felt acutely. To bring such an unfounded charge against him was in itself an atrocious and cruel blunder, while to have kept him under arrest for so long a period, at the risk of his health, was an injustice that ought most certainly to have been enquired into and dealt with. For I do not consider that a mere grant of land was a sufficient compensation to Dunne for such outrageous treatment.

At 4.30 next morning Day and I were up, and before day had broken we said good-bye, and were across the stream and away. A delightful ride of twenty miles brought us to the Umzingwan, where we found another hostel at which we rested until 3.30 p.m., when we made for Umshabetsi, which we did not, however, reach until after dark, as the distance given us, of seventeen miles, was underrated by at least three miles. Here is a dry sand-bed, and the sole water supply is contained in two small holes, about 200 yards to the left of the drift, which we found after great difficulty, groping about on our hands and knees, almost blocked up with sand; and when we had scraped them out, they were no bigger than an ordinary hand basin, and the supply of water was very limited for two thirsty men and three thirsty horses. After much scraping and more patience, however, we managed to get water enough for all of us, but in the dark we could not find enough fuel for a fire, so went to sleep on the sand, tired and supperless.

The following morning, Wednesday, 23rd, at 5 o'clock, saw us on our way, and at Setoutsie's by 9 a.m. All along the road we met strings of empty waggons returning from Salisbury, and on most of them were parties of discharged and dissatisfied policemen, who have little to say in favour of the country, for it seems the Company have already commenced to make considerable reductions in the police. A cheese-paring policy surely, and slightly premature, to say the least, with the Matabele nut yet uncracked. The water at Setoutsie was execrable, but to make up for it the grazing was good, so we gave our ponies their fill before on-saddling. A few miles on we met the royal mail, *en route* to Tuli, outspanned near a nice pool of water, under some shady trees, quite close to the road. The sun was blazing fiercely down, and the veldt in the near vicinity, for miles around, was on fire, and as it was a close day you can imagine how intensely stifling it was. From here on to Mateepis, about thirteen miles, the bush was burning, in many parts crackling and hissing on both sides of the road, and we found it most unpleasantly hot. During our ride we crossed the Bubi and Bubijan rivers, which are three-quarters of a mile apart, and at this point the country begins to change, becoming more broken by granite kopjes, which are better covered with larger and finer trees, making the scenery wilder and more picturesque.

At Mateepis we found the road-making party I had sent from Tuli, and one of the men shewed me a wild vine that he had discovered in the bush. In the early part of the night we had a thunderstorm, that was followed by a drizzle which kept on all night, and in the morning (Thursday, 24th) a dense Scotch mist enveloped the whole country as we rode along, damp and chilled to the bone, and we would have given all we could for the sun that, on the previous day, we had been roundly abusing. This continued all day, in spite of the sun making one or two ineffectual attempts to burst through.

Yet in these occasional glimpses we could see that we were riding through a grand and beautiful country. A ride of twenty-six miles, with an off-saddle, brought us to the Nuanetsi, a mighty torrent that, in the rains, rushes down from its mountain home, here over huge rocks and boulders, there burrowing through the rock with terrific force.

The party under Corporal Clogg, who are stretching wire ropes across the rivers, on which the boats are to work, were hard at work making holes, and the one on the east bank, close

to the river, was at a depth of 15 feet, all through rich red soil.

Here is the only telegraph-office between Tuli and Victoria; it is perched up on a big hill from 800 to 1000 feet above the surrounding level. Such a climb as it was, too, immediately after a hearty meal—for our time was limited—but I am glad now that I made it. The view was simply splendid, and repaid me, for on the top of the hill we were well above the wet shroud that hung all over the country, at a very low level, however, which aided rather than impeded the view by lending a weird piquancy to it.

A panorama of old-time eruptions, tree and grass-clad from base to summit, delicious to the eye, with the soft hue of spring's vernal green, lay stretched around me, whose magnificence was shaded and shadowed by the ghostly grey-white curtain that floated over the valleys, in appearance like a sea of mirage, with emerald-studded islets rising sheer from its surface, and only giving a suspicion of the numberless streams that form quite a network of silver threads all over the country.

Going into the hut, which answered the double purpose of office and dwelling, I had a talk on the wires with Tuli, then hurried down, and once more Day and I rode forward, sleeping that night under the shelter of a waggon belonging to a party of our men, who had been sent from Victoria to see to the boats. And right glad we were of even this rude shelter, I can tell you, for during the night the mist grew thicker and wetter, chilling us to the very marrow.

In the morning (Friday, 25th) the sun burst out in a radiancy of warmth and splendour, colouring the clouds and mists with tints of varying beauty that were delightful, and shewing us how very wild and extremely beautiful were our surroundings. But unfortunately it was only a flash in the pan, for once more the mist grew upward, and enveloped us in its damp and gloomy clutches, shutting out the world, and depressing us most terribly. At 10 a.m. we crossed the Lundi, now only three feet deep, but considered the most formidable in the wet season.

In the Naka pass I met Beit, who informed me that a reef had been struck near Victoria, rich enough in itself, should all the rest turn out failures, to save the country. This does not sound as hopeful as I imagined, and I did not like the tone in which he imparted it, for there appeared to me to be a false ring about it that was unmistakable. Certainly up to

the present not one of the reports we have had has been practical—merely expressions of opinion based on casual, hasty, and imperfect surveys of some few of the old workings, and much too sanguine to be worth much. In fact, there has not been sufficient time in which to prospect the country properly or thoroughly, but, judging from the way Beit spoke, I should imagine that both Perkin and Rolker have reported unfavourably upon it.

That night we camped by ourselves in a snug little corner behind a large rock that sheltered us from the wind, but which did not prevent the reeking moisture from saturating us.

Saturday morning (26th) found us crossing the Tokwe, another troublesome torrent, and here we passed a party of Mangwatos, who had been working on telegraph construction, on their way back to Pilapwie. It seems they have refused to go any further, so Smith informed me, as they must return to till their crops. Neither promises nor threats have been of any avail, and, even at the risk of incurring Khama's anger and displeasure, they have insisted on going back.

To Smith, who is in charge of the construction, and who moved heaven and earth to dissuade them, they replied, "It is all very well for Khama and you white men. You have people who will till your lands, and take care of your crops and families in your absence, but we have no one; and if we do not do it ourselves, no one will do it for us, and our wives and children will starve and die." An answer containing much soundness and common sense, unanswerable, in fact, to which Smith could not reply; and so they have gone, and left the construction of the telegraph in a serious predicament, for the intention now is to carry it right up to Salisbury.

By nine a.m. Day and I arrived at Fern Spruit, where we off-saddled, and had a bathe and a snack. In the spruit flows a lovely little stream, with fern-lined banks, and trees arching overhead; and as the cool, crystal clear water rippled over golden sand and pebbles shining like silver, we plunged into a nice little pool that was waist deep, the noise of our splashing frightening a large black snake that glided into a hole. It was a lovely morning, but very hot, as the sun, which had dispelled the mist, seemed to be making up for lost time, so we enjoyed our dip immensely! Midday found us in Victoria, which a very few words will describe.

A miserable lot of huts, and a wretched earthwork—which to call a fort is irony of the deepest description—all falling to

pieces, with one or two shanty stores standing on a large sandy plain ; while a second fort, and new set of huts in process of construction, is all there is of this half-way house to Salisbury.

Chaplin is in command here, and Cunningham, who was Turner's sergeant-major, and has been promoted to lieutenant, is his subaltern.

Selous has ridden in from Salisbury, and through to Tuli. He has been sent down by Jameson to inquire into the cause of the delay in the arrival of food supplies. He asked me how many waggons I had passed on the road, and I told him from twenty to twenty-five. Selous did not say much—he never does, being essentially a man of action, pure and simple, whom it is impossible not to admire and respect. For without knowing why, contact with him makes the inestimable value of silence most appreciable ; and to meet him in the "gabbing" crowd out here is like entering into a haven of rest after a passage of storm and stress. For if there is one characteristic in the average Africander, or individual who has been a few years in South Africa (for it is both contagious and infectious), that is decidedly objectionable, it is their continual bluster, which stamps them indelibly as a local product.

Gab may rule the world, but it quite as certainly ruins the world, and in the interests of Mashonaland it is a great pity that a few more such as Selous are not among its pioneers ; and one of my own silent regrets during my stay up here has been, and is, that I have not seen more of a man whose sterling qualities and whose charming personality I appreciate and admire at a distance.

But although Selous did not say much, I have gathered information elsewhere, from which it appears that great dissatisfaction exists in Salisbury at the scarcity of food, more especially as the wet season is fast approaching, and Tye has had enough of the dry season in which to supply the whole country for a year and more. I know that, in spite of the contract existing between the Chartered Company and the Tuli Trading Association, Tye has ordered most of the supplies from Julius Weil, and a small portion from Isaacs, of Mafeking, and that a great deal of the transport has been obtained through the former's agency. Can these facts in any way account for the delay, and has our "astute" administrator at last begun to smell a rat ? How easily the astutest of us are at times bamboozled over questions that are evident to the

meanest intellects! An inexplicable anomaly, yet an anomaly all the same.

The following letter I received from Rolker will interest you, so I give it in full :

"Speaking of the country and its mining prospects, there has been, on an average, ground pegged out most injudiciously, and without careful preliminary testing. Many have simply pegged on old workings, without first ascertaining whether anything valuable had been left.

"I have, so far, seen the Upper Mazoe, Hartley Hills, Concession Hills, and the Eiffel, and I can only say, in general terms, I don't think you have missed your fortune. In two or three weeks I go to Manica, where, from all accounts, very little work has been done; and I receive hearsay reports about it by this time with incredulity. That district has one thing *à priori* in its favour—it is nearer the coast, and the cost of working will, of necessity, be less than elsewhere. This means a lower grade ore can there be worked than in the other districts. If I find anything promising there, I'll call your attention to it, so that you may be able to buy in, as a sort of developing company, a thing or institution which will be much needed in Mashonaland. You go safer in that way than by the present system of pegging-out and sinking of thirty-feet shafts and cross-cuts, etc., on every block, which only gives possession of title for a year, but very rarely will be able to prove a mine valuable.

"I doubt whether Lo Magunda will fall to my lot this year, as the rains will probably interfere, and prevent me.

"All reports of Beit having bought D Troop property are erroneous, as he probably will have told you in person.

"A reaction from the hopeful feeling will set in, since the people expected too much from the *so-far* developed country. I believe that eventually the country will be shewn up to contain valuable districts, after it has been carefully and systematically gone over and opened up; but the process of opening it will be slower than what most people expected.

"Good miners are scarce all over the world; and, so far as I have seen, South Africa has been made out of similar truck as the remainder of the world. I don't know how many of the sixteen mules left by Beit at Victoria died, but of the remaining twenty-four animals I think eleven or twelve died. We had to hire oxen to pull the heavier material in; and some things—among them my assay box—were loaded off on other waggons, and I have not yet received them. There seems to be great difficulty in getting waggons through, and much loss of oxen is experienced. If I were you, I should be slow in coming up here for the rainy season. Very little, or nothing, can be done in the way of work, I am told; but by the next dry season, many things on which light is wanted will then be known, and an early start then, guided by these lights, will accomplish quite as much as a present start.

"So far, the best business seems to be buying whisky by the 100 or 200 cases, and selling it at £20 a case; but how long the money of the people will last for that, I cannot say."

But the post waits, so no more until I reach Salisbury.

CHAPTER XL.

SALISBURY.

LEAVE VICTORIA AND ARRIVE AT SALISBURY—MAORI BROWNE IS MISTAKEN FOR TYE—HARRIS'S UNPOPULARITY—PREVAILING DISCONTENT.

From 28th September to 19th October, 1891.

IT was after midday, on Monday, 28th, that Day and I left Victoria, each of us riding as light as possible, with a blanket, a sausage, a small tin of cocoa, a few biscuits, and a couple of boxes of matches apiece, not forgetting the inevitable billy. We had been reduced to two ponies now, as I had been obliged to leave No. 16, the horse Day had ridden on from Tuli, at Victoria with a sore back, and, Chaplin being unable to spare me an animal, I put Day on the pack horse.

Early in the day we passed Mr. Van der Byl's party, who are thinking of settling somewhere in the vicinity of Mount Wedzga; also some Mashona villages, close to the road, perched up on high rocks, for all the world like exaggerated eyries. It was, on the whole, a most enjoyable day, with only one unpleasant incident, a flight of locusts that we rode into, which were nearly as bad as a hailstorm.

After we had ridden about forty miles, darkness overtook us at a bend in the road, an old outspan, evidently, that rejoiced in the familiar name of Hyde Park Corner, carved in rude letters on a board that was nailed to a tree about eight feet from the ground. Not long after we had off-saddled and built a large fire, Jameson and Hannay came up in their waggon and outspanned here for the night. Fortunately for us, as it happened, because it rained smartly during the night, so we were able to keep ourselves dry.

The next morning, after some breakfast which they kindly gave us, we rode on, passing Curtin with a batch of ponies and horses during the afternoon. As Day had knocked up the second pony, again with a sore back, and I had no wish to remain on the road, I bought a salted pony from him for £65, so, leaving the casualty with Curtin, who promised to bring it in, we shoved on. That night, after a very long ride, quite fifty miles I should think by the timing of my watch, we pulled

up at a small store, close to Iniazizi post station, that has been recently started by two ex-troopers of D troop, who gave us a shakedown.

Wednesday evening (1st October) saw us at Iniat, a post station in charge of Corporal Gordon, who, I found, was a brother of Gordon in the Bengal Cavalry, whom I knew at Agra in years gone by.

On Thursday morning we arrived at Charter, which is in charge of Codrington and a few men, remaining there for the rest of the day, and not leaving until the next morning. The same day we overtook Rhodes' waggons, and lunched with Tyson and Lange, and, in the evening, we camped at the same outspan. My new purchase was so badly girth-galled that I had to leave it and Day to come on with the waggons. Three animals knocked up in a ride of 430 miles is most disastrous, and speaks badly for Day's riding, for I brought Dandy Dick into Salisbury without a rub or a scratch, and all who saw him on the day following declared that he looked as fresh and as fit as if he had not been out of his stable. He is a splendid little fellow, and I took every care of him, my rule being to off-saddle three times a day, each of us rubbing down his own pony before allowing them to drink and graze.

It was 11.50 a.m. on Saturday (3rd October) when I reached Salisbury and rode up to the police quarters, passing, at an early hour in the morning, Slade and Peter Flower, who were on their way home, by waggon to Tuli, and from there on in the coach.

I have given you a very meagre account of what was one of the pleasantest rides I have ever enjoyed, in spite of the heavy and wetting mist that prevailed a great part of the time, but the magnificent open country we rode through along the watershed, rolling grassy uplands relieved by patches of bush and timber and streams innumerable, was more than enough to make up for any drawback.

The day following my arrival, Sunday, the first thing I did was to walk over to the hospital, to pay my respects to Mother Patrick and the Sisters, whom I found, I am pleased to say, in the very best of health and spirits, and as usual employed in good works. They like Salisbury very much better than either Macloutsie or Tuli, and no wonder, for in climate alone it has a decided advantage. I had afternoon tea and a long talk with Mother Patrick over the old country, and about old times and old friends, and I have come away feeling all the

better for it. There is little local news. Rhodes is on his way up here *via* Beira, and Jameson has gone to Umtali to meet him.

The town, which, as far as population is concerned, is not large, is fairly so in extent, considering it is only a year old; but it straggles all over the place, as the few hundred huts composing it are frightfully scattered about. Stores and auctioneers seem to predominate, and the hotels and bars are driving a fine trade, as you can imagine, with whiskies-and-sodas at half-a-guinea, and whisky—or, to be more correct, Portuguese potato spirit, made on the coast and put into whisky bottles—at £3 a bottle. I have not had the courage or inclination to taste any, but Deerhurst, who drank a glass the other night, changed into as many colours as a chameleon, and was quite ill after it, and he has no wish to try another.

Harris is most unpopular here, and is seldom or ever seen outside the Company's offices, which are a mile away from the town, and close to the fort and police lines. The report is, that he is afraid to shew his nose in the town for fear of receiving a castigation, but whether this is true or not, he certainly keeps to himself, and very wisely too, I think.

Many people here are disappointed with things in general, and dissatisfied by the scarcity, and, therefore, dearness of provisions, and the poorness of mining prospects in particular, as the opinion of the experts is said to be unfavourable, a statement that Rolker, on his part, repudiates.

Of course, in all new countries more especially, there are always a certain number of malcontents, usually ne'er-do-wells, who do a lot of mischief by trying to make others discontented. Naturally I do not allude to such riff-raff, but to the better and more respectable class, who have organized themselves into a body with a committee, for the purpose of ventilating their grievances by approaching Rhodes on his arrival, and one of the leading members of this Reform Committee, is my old friend Rand, who, I know, is not the man either to identify or associate himself with any disreputable or unhealthy movement. His name, in fact, is a guarantee of its good faith and sound common sense.

To give you some small idea as to the state of feeling that exists about the supply question, Maori Browne, who is considered to be something like Tye in appearance, was evidently mistaken for him the other day, by a lot of men who set on, and were proceeding to chastise him, and it was some time

before they would accept his statement, that he was not the senior commissariat officer, but himself, Major Browne.

The town is at present almost empty, nearly everyone being out prospecting, and making the most of the dry weather. Still there are a goodly number of faces that are familiar to me, and among them many with whom I am acquainted. Maund is here, and speaks well of all that he has seen in the country, but then, as he has large interests at stake in it, and is ignorant of the mining science except in his own estimation, I accept his statement with a pinch of snuff and an ounce of table salt.

Sauer and Williams are also in, the latter and Maund having returned from an extensive trip along the Umsweswi, and the opinion of the latter is worth having, I should say, because he is a mining engineer in the first place, is a Scotchman in the second, and has had several years of South African experience in the third. Yet even his opinion must be received with a certain amount of caution, as I fancy he is one of the clique, or charmed inner circle if you like it better.

Condon and McKay are also to be seen, and the former tells me that the mystery which hangs over Baumann's death has, to this day, never been cleared up. It seems that when they were down in Manica, they were walking along the usual narrow track in the jungle, through tall grass about seven or eight feet high, and Baumann stopped back for a minute, shouting to the rest of the party to go on, as he would overtake them in a few minutes. They went on, but after some time had elapsed without his turning up, some of them turned back, and although they searched everywhere, and made all inquiries among the natives, they never found his body, or even a trace of it. And the only conclusions they came to were that he had either been carried away by a lion, or had fallen down one of the old shafts, many of which are scattered about that district. Poor fellow, a miserable fate to befall a life of vigour and promise, for nothing is so unsatisfactory as the wretched uncertainty of it all !

Johnson has not come up as yet, and in spite of his belief in the country, he seems to prefer remaining most of his time at Cape Town, but he is, I am told, expected to arrive with Rhodes. Heany, the head-piece of the firm, is at Umtali ; Borrow, the third partner, evidently a smart and capable young fellow, is managing the business at this place.

Among others, I have come across Romilly, Stokes, Bird

Wyatt, Deerhurst, Gourlay, Molyneux, Finch, looking as hard and as determined as ever, and several others, besides many of the men. Hutchinson, of D Troop, who used to be one of Turner's signallers at Tuli, and who has now set up at the Causeway as an attorney-at-law ; Boodle, our late regimental sergeant-major, keeping a general store close to the fort ; Montgomery, late sergeant-major of B Troop ; Sergeant-Major Reid ; Campbell, of C Troop, now an auctioneer ; and Divine, one of the best men in the country, who is disgusted with things, and tells me that he is going back to Cape Town.

While of the officials and police officers, Rand, Nesbitt, Duncan, Newdigate, Hawtayne, Pennefather, Forbes, Graham, Jones, and Lendy are here at present.

Indeed, the assortment of people in Salisbury is really and positively fearful and wonderful in its extraordinary variety, and, to add to it, we have a slight sprinkling of foreign nationalities, a real live French count, and, what is more to the purpose, a French cook, a few Germans, Poles, and Swedes, etc., making, in fact, a splendid school for students of human nature.

The enterprising army of salvation, including female members, has already unfurled its flag in the African Salisbury, but so far the only notable feature of their campaign has been to slay a giraffe ! Indeed, religion is strongly represented—Catholics, Church of England, and Wesleyanism, holding weekly services, and here again, by supporting and assisting them all in every way, Rhodes displays a depth of common sense, and a breadth of mind which, in themselves, stamp him as an uncommon personality.

I wish I was not in such a terrific hurry, as I am sure I could both interest and amuse you with a description of a few of the types, but in this instance I am afraid you will have to take the wish for the deed.

Auctions and sales have been the daily order of the week, the prices realised being sometimes simply fabulous ; a six-penny tin of Morton's jam selling for thirty-five shillings, and some of Crosse and Blackwell's plum puddings and patés at £1 5s. to £1 10s. apiece. But the event of the week that has eclipsed everything else, has been the auction of Lord Randolph's things, which lasted three days, and was conducted by the firm of Hopley and Papenfus, realising over £3000. The outfit in consequence is to be broken up, Lord Randolph, Perkins, and Giles going home, Coventry back to his corps at Macloutsie, Williams being the only one remaining to look after its interests.

On the first day of the sale I met the ex-minister, but he is apparently suffering from shortness of vision, and failed to recognise me, until Giles drew his attention. This is all I have seen of him, and all I want to, for he has not had the common civility to ask me to his camp, and I have been *uncivil* enough not to go. Coventry, who has been with him for several weeks, dined for the last time the other night, and while his noble lordship regaled him with tea, he himself drank a liberal supply of champagne. Such is the generous and snobbish stuff of which some of our aristocrats are made, yet, for the sake of our British aristocracy, they are but exceptions I should hope, though I cannot say much in favour of most of the specimens who are up here. Rank undoubtedly has its obligations and responsibilities, a standard whose level is too high for them to attain.

I have been talking to Rolker, who, in reply to a question of mine if he had condemned the country, said, "People have attributed to me things I have never said at all."

"Then what you said in your last letter to me is your real opinion?"

"Most certainly it is!"

"In that case would you advise me to stick to the country?"

"Why, certainly I would, but it will take time, remember, and as I told you in my letter, when the country has been thoroughly and properly prospected, valuable districts will be discovered.

Rolker is right, and the whole question of the ultimate success of Mashonaland depends on three things, viz., (1) time, (2) transport, and (3) the settlement of the Matabele problem. It stands to reason, the more rapid in its locomotion is the transport, the cheaper will it be in the long run, and in every other sense as well, and as such it will be an economy of *time*, and therefore of *money*, for what is time saved but money to the good?

The only thing to be done, therefore, to expand the country, is to build a light tram railway to Salisbury, and so reduce present transport from £80 a ton to £10, for a line across the fly-belt is all very well as a temporary measure, while to Umtali it is only a little better. These are only half-measures, indicative of a half-hearted policy, and to ensure success, a whole-hearted policy and full-measures are distinctly needful. But until the Matabele are crushed and welded into shape, the success of Rhodesia either as a mining concern, or a new market and administration, will never be accomplished.

To further and mature its interests, the formation of developing companies on the system advocated by Rolker, whose views strike me as thoroughly sound and practical, should, I think, be adopted.

Although Perkins' report on the country is not nearly so favourable as his, I am, on the whole, quite hopeful of its future, provided the contingencies already alluded to are taken into consideration. But in the blinding glare and insidious glamour of the gold question, we must not lose sight of the very important fact of the farming capacity of the country, which ought to, I think, receive more attention than it has hitherto received from the authorities, and every encouragement should be given to induce farmers from the colony, as well as England, to come and settle.

According to Selous, the crops of the Mashonas are more sure and regular than those obtained by the natives in any other part of South Africa that he knows of, a significant fact, surely, that is well worth seeing and enquiring into.

To resume about the gold. Robert Williams, who has had Randt experience, speaks very well of it, which is more than he does of the prospectors, the great majority of whom know little or nothing, he says, about mining, and have seen very little of the country, the latter part of which remark applies to a great extent to Perkins, whose inspection of it, after all, has been limited, cursory, and more or less superficial, owing to want of means and of time.

Woodthorpe Graham, who is mining commissioner at Hartley Hill, writes me that in his district alone the properties pegged out already amount to 6000 or 7000 claims, many of which he considers good; and, speaking of the Eiffel district, in spite of the adverse opinion of the experts, he is of opinion that some of the reefs will turn out well, the scarceness of water, however, being a drawback. And he concludes his letter with an interesting item of information about the Concession Hill district, which he has learnt from the Mata-bele, that three generations ago a tribe were working here for gold, who were entirely exterminated during a raid—blacks, I presume, but he does not say.

Rhodes and Jameson arrived here on Friday, the 16th, *via* Beira and Umtali, travelling in the former's usual rapid way, at express speed, for our Colossus is no sluggard, I can tell you, and neither weeds nor grass have time to grow under his feet. The same remark applies to his plans and policies,

which, once formed, he carries through without let or hindrance, for hesitation is a tendency as non-existent as unflinching purpose is inherent in his organism ; so it is to be hoped that he will take up the railway scheme. As for the Matabele, he will make short shrift of them if he gets the chance, or, if they do not give it to him, he and Jameson between them will make it, as sure as eggs are eggs !

Rhodes' presence on this occasion has been most opportune, as anyone who is acquainted with the history of Mashonaland since its commencement will readily concede. That general dissatisfaction prevails among the majority of the people, and that grievances against the Company do exist, I feel bound to admit, for there can be no doubt that the terms they have imposed on mining are excessive, and in striking contrast to those of the Mozambique Company in Manica.

I have neither time nor space here to discuss the question in all its merits. Suffice it to say that in the formation of a new State, before the requisite machinery necessary to regulate it has been put in motion, much less formulated into a system, it is only natural to expect defects and mistakes. Still, I am at a loss to understand why Jameson, as Administrator, has not in some measure remedied or alleviated the existing evils ; or why, in any case, he has not tried to mollify the complaints with those soft, suave words that will turn away the fiercest wrath, and which no one up here, at all events, can use to better effect than he.

The only explanation I can offer is that Jameson, who will undergo any amount of physical fatigue, is very much averse to office work, all or most of which he has left to Harris, who, though undoubtedly hard working, is a man of narrow views, mean capacity, objectionable in his manner, and deservedly unpopular. And yet this is but a lame excuse after all, for Jameson, as Administrator, is certainly responsible for the shortcomings of his subordinates. However, Rhodes, through his thoroughness of purpose, as well as by the power and earnestness of his language, through the medium of which, if he does not fascinate, he can inspire confidence—the true objective of all statesmen or rulers—has pacified the grumblers, and attained the principal object of his visit.

Apart from any other consideration, that there must be some great qualities in a man who can do this, no one will deny. That by mere words, so easily spoken, and as readily forgotten—for promises invariably belong to the shaky order of pie-

crust—one man can achieve what a million others could not by written agreements, is a fact that speaks for itself. But that the promises in this instance are sincere, and that the Colossus has every intention of carrying them out, I feel quite sure, for his own reputation as well as in the public interest; for ambition and love of power are too strong within him to risk so easily, yet, though he has made certain small and unimportant concessions, he has not given way in the reduction of the 50 per cent.

On this point there are arguments for and against on both sides. Those who support the Company assert that, if it had not been for them, Mashonaland would be *non est*; and that, in return for this fact, plus the risk and heavy outlay, the Company are entitled to a half-share in the profit, and that those who do not like these terms have the remedy in their own hands, and can go elsewhere; and there is a certain amount of truth in their arguments.

But their opponents maintain that if Rhodes and Co. had not secured the country another company would, and they draw attention to the fact that the Chartered Company were not by any means the original *concessionnaires*, and what they object to is that the company wants half profits without sharing in the risks, and their contention is that 25 per cent. would be quite sufficient to claim. But I have already said too much, and must soon bring this to a close.

I was almost forgetting to tell you of my meeting with Jerome and Ferreira, which brought the Mashonaland Agricultural and Supply Association to an abrupt termination, and a summary winding up. It appears that I was just in time to prevent them collaring the proceeds, and clearing out by Beira without any settlement. At first the oily Jerome tried to bluff me by talking big, but when I produced a warrant, duly executed by Caldecott, legal adviser to the Company, and signed by Forbes, as magistrate, he altered his tone and agreed to do anything. Then it transpired that partners Jerome and Ferreira had made about £150 with our waggon, which was now on its way down country with Flower and Slade, who had paid them £40 a head for their passage, and that they had not put a cent into the concern. However, Nesbitt and myself, who were the only other members of the Syndicate, agreed, on behalf of the absent members, to take the amount of our shares only, which was promptly refunded.

So you see that my misgivings and fears were not unfounded,

and I have learnt a salutary lesson to avoid strange syndicates, or syndicates of any kind for the matter of that, and even our police concern is most unsatisfactory, and I keep on subscribing to it without any return. So no more for me, as I leave such luxuries to those who have more money than they know what to do with ; for they are nothing more or less than an expensive and idiotic form of gambling or speculation, which does not even have the excitement or doubtful compensation of getting us some fun for our money, as we do with cards or on the Stock Exchange. And yet I cannot say that with reference to the M.A. and S.A., which gave me an exciting chase and an amusing finish. Fairbridge, the correspondent of the *Argus*, who passed through Tuli some few months ago, is here as editor and proprietor of the *Mashonaland Herald*, a shilling weekly that he produces off a hectograph, or gelatine press ; it is a long way in advance of the Tuli curiosity.

Jameson has another brother here, who has been mining and prospecting in Australia since early in the fifties, but for the last few years has been trying his luck in South Africa. It is evident that the administrator has all the brains of the family, although the miner, who is a very rough diamond, is shrewd and has a touch of the same dry humour.

I forgot to tell you that I have seen Van der Decken, who was lost and is found, after an interval of forty-seven days. He is now strong and hearty, and in possession of all his senses, but he must have gone through an awful ordeal. It appears that he lost himself when out shooting, could not find his way back, and expended all his ammunition firing in the hopes of attracting attention. He kept himself alive on roots, berries, and on the pulp of the vegetable ivory palm nut, but gradually grew weaker and weaker, sleeping most of his time in an ant-bear hole close to a pool of water, to which he used to crawl with difficulty. He lost all count of time, and the only pleasing reminiscences he has are vague recollections that he used to get at times—when he felt in the most perfect state of bliss—of Mother Patrick coming and feeding him with the most delicious broths and delicacies ! But his general remembrance of it is very confused and misty, and he had no distinct recollection of his rescue. What a mingling of the spiritual and material in his dreams of Mother Patrick, and what a train of thought is here opened up ! What endurance and tenacity to life, and what a wonderful resurrection altogether !

CHAPTER XLI.

UMTALI.

I LEAVE FOR UMTALI—MANICA—A FARMER'S PARADISE—AN ARTIST'S DREAM—A DREAMER'S UTOPIA—A SPORTSMAN'S REALITY—A NATURALIST'S RETREAT.

From 20th to 30th October, 1891.

IN company with Herbert Molyneux (brother of the Captain Molyneux who was our Quartermaster at Macloutsie in the early phase of the expedition) and two others, we left Salisbury on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 20th, on foot, with a Scotch cart to carry our luggage.

Before, however, going any further, I must go back to the previous day, and tell you of my last night at the Mashona capital. Naturally, according to the ordinary usages of the Service, to which most of the senior officers of the police belonged, I should have been invited as a guest to dine at mess. After breakfast, however, Forbes, who was mess president, came and said that the Colonel had told him to ask me if I would mind dining out that night, to make room for Rhodes, Jameson, and Lord Randolph, who were coming to dinner, because only a limited number of people could be accommodated.

To this I readily assented, making arrangements to dine over at the kopje with Llewellyn and Deerhurst. Late in the afternoon Forbes again came, and told me that room had been made for me if I would change my mind and come to dinner, but this I very naturally declined to do.

Later on I met Rand, who was simply furious because he too had been requested to dine out that night, but without the true reason having been assigned. This he had subsequently discovered, and he was so annoyed over it all, that he there and then withdrew from the mess for good. He informed me that he had quite made up his mind to resign his position of P.M.O. to the Company ; and Rand is a man of his word, who does not only speak, but acts.

I do not think that Forbes was altogether responsible for such an utter want of form, although as mess president he had a good deal to say to it ; still I am astonished that a man of Forbes' manly straightforwardness should have, even at Penne-

father's instigation, mixed himself up with a matter so mean and contemptible. Oh, the pity of it, dear friend, the pity of it ! But if this world of ours is small, humanity within it is still smaller, and with this sage reflection I will get on.

When I returned from the kopje, between 10 and 11 p.m., I went to bed, but not to sleep, for the room I was sleeping in, being close to the dining-room and open all round at the top, the hum of the conversation, scraps of which I could not help overhearing, kept me awake.

For a long time Rhodes, Jameson, and Lord Randolph discussed the Manica question, the Beira incident, when Willoughby was fired at by the Portuguese, in particular; Lord Randolph asserting his opinion most emphatically that the commander of the English gunboat would have been perfectly justified, and quite within his rights, if he had turned his guns on, landed a force, and taken possession of Beira. Jameson agreed that this would have been the proper course, but pointed out that a man acting in this way, on his own responsibility, would have lost his commission for certain, and have been sent into disgrace owing to official red tape ; but Lord Randolph declared very positively, that as a member of the Cabinet, he for one would have vigorously defended and belauded such an act of prompt decision. Indeed, from all I could gather, Lord Randolph, Rhodes, and Jameson were altogether in favour of men rising to the occasion, and putting this and certain deductions together, with reports I have heard, I quite believe that it was Rhodes' intention, after Heyman's fight at Masikessi, to push on and occupy Beira, but in Jameson's absence, Colquhoun would not act on his own responsibility, and so, as soon as it was possible, his services were dispensed with, and Rhodes' other self appointed in his place. That the consequences would have been disastrous, or at all events led to international arbitration or complications, cannot be denied ; yet, with the true national spirit of the filibuster within me, I am sorry we did not go on.

I am sorry I have neither the time nor the opportunity to describe to you what has been an uneventful, but one of the most enjoyable trips I have ever experienced —one long and delightful picnic, in fact ! In spite of the Scotch cart, I walked almost every mile of the way, through a perfectly beautiful country, magnificently watered, prettily beflowered, well wooded, and splendidly adapted for grazing and agriculture ! I wish I could describe it simply to give

you even an idea of it—a very bare and meagre one at that—but I do not feel equal to the task.

You know my reverence for Nature, not only because of its beauties, which are more innumerable manifold than all the grains of sand belonging to this puny world, added on to every atom which comprises the great all of infinity, but because of the comprehensive teachings contained in every molecule, even the tiniest, of its wondrous evolution, which, inspired as it is by the ever expanding, ever eternal, source, surpasses, in a way that we cannot realise or comprehend, even in the wildest conjecture of the wildest imagination, the eternity of elastic time, and the boundlessness of infinity, almost more incomprehensible to us in their limitless, never-ending immensity, than even the secret of life itself, over which hangs the mystery of all mysteries, as mystic and as wonderful as God Himself, the great evolutor and inspirer of Nature, and all life in Nature—life itself omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent—the beginning and end of all! To me Nature is a religion, more beautiful in its catholic universality, because of the indissoluble link which connects her with God; and never was Peter, that fiery apostle of Christianity, so near to the mark, or to the source of all religion, as when he learnt the true and beautiful lesson, which he afterwards taught, that nothing of God's life was common or unclean—one of the truest and most beautiful lessons ever inculcated in all time.

So it is that to a little atom like myself Nature is indescribable—too grand and too glorious, too deep, too broad, and too far above me to do more than attempt a mere blotch or splash of ink. In the words of Byron, I

"Leave to learned fingers and wise hands,
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
How well his connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend and the voluptuous swell:
Let these describe the indescribable.
* * * * *
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam."

And though I could write you pages on the moral and deeper impressions produced on me by the internal beauty and grandeur of the scenery we have passed through, I cannot do more than [describe its external loveliness in more than a sentence or two. But I will spare you the moralising, as my

time is limited, and in a few words, the country between Salisbury and Umtali looked to me like a farmer's paradise, an artist's dream, a dreamer's Utopia, while to a sportsman it is a living reality abounding in game, and to a naturalist, a lover of nature in the true and literal sense, it is a retreat beyond the wildest conception of his imagination. The beautiful water and the lovely flowers, above all, the gorgeously coloured, deliciously scented lilies, floating on the shining surface of the deep pools, making them look perfect pictures of a repose and beauty only to be dreamt of, while the artistic combination of wavy undulations, rolling plains, bold hills, flowing streams, graceful woods, delightfully green, now in shadow, now in the full glare of a glorious sun, formed a scenic effect that can never be effaced from my memory !

On the road we passed and repassed several others who, like ourselves, were homeward bound ; but many are only leaving the country to avoid the rains. Deerhurst, with his pack donkeys ; Maund travelling in state with a valet, a waggon and horses, as well as all the luxuries procurable ; Sauer and Williams also very comfortable ; while going towards Salisbury were Heany and Coventry, who has been to Umtali for a trip before returning to Macloutsie.

We got into Umtali on the 30th, and if the country has been beautiful all along, the scenery for the last march in, about twenty miles, and all around the place itself, is simply superb with all the adjectives expressing beauty added and multiplied.

The settlement here is not nearly so big as I expected, and in a bad situation. A new township, however, has been laid out on an excellent site, with charming surroundings, to which an exodus will be shortly made.

The Church, under Bishop Knight-Bruce, who has already gone to Beira, on his way home, has, with an evident eye to the beautiful, chosen this place as its headquarters, and the six nursing Sisters, under Miss Blennerhasset, brought up by the Bishop, are still here ; but I will refrain from drawing a comparison between them and their Catholic *confrères* under Mother Patrick.

Bruce, my former subaltern, is in command here, and with him is Hickey, and Lichfield, the doctor. They were all glad to see me, as I was to see them, and Bruce made me welcome, and did all he could to make me comfortable.

To-day, the 1st of November, Maund, Williams, Sauer, and

myself, had a look at some of the gold properties, especially the Sabi Ophir reef, which is 7 feet broad, and good, with a 30 feet shaft ; and the prevailing opinion is that Umtali and its neighbourhood, as a gold-field, will be a great success. Naturally, every one interested is looking out for Rolker's expected visit and report. If it turns out nothing more, as a sanatorium and health resort, and a half-way house between Salisbury and Beira, it should do well.

No more at present, except that we are off to Masikessi to-morrow morning.

CHAPTER XLII.

BOBBERT'S STORE, NEAR NEVES FERREIRA.

I WALK TO NEVES FERREIRA.

From November 2nd to November 12th, 1891.

IT was early in the morning of the 2nd November, while the sun was yet a-coming, that Molyneux and myself started for Masikessi. At first we walked through low-lying, marshy country, but after one or two uncommonly stiff and steep climbs, we got in among grass-covered, rugged hills, full of crannies and clefts, in which grew bushes and trees, while wild raspberries and plantains were quite common.

The number of little mountain streams, with water almost icy cold, plashing and murmuring downward, brought to mind all sorts of reminiscences of home, with its soothing vernal beauties, and of the majestic Himalayas, towering upwards, their lofty summits crowned by snow, eternal and ethereal, and losing themselves in the cloudy world above! And at one, more picturesque than the rest, that rushed out of a great fissure in the rocky side of a hill that frowned upon us, relieved, however, by a graceful and variegated foliage, we reclined and breakfasted under the pleasant shade of a large tree. Presently someone looked up and discovered a snake coiled upon the end of the branch that spread out not far above our heads, dispelling the pleasant sense of peaceful security that pervaded us! But it was only momentary, for we soon made short work of him.

What is there in a snake that stirs up all the enmity and animosity of our natures, and which makes us quick to strike and kill? Not surely and simply the feeling that his bite is death! Answering for myself, a snake is a deadly antipathy that I loathe, not alone because of his venom, but from some indefinable and unaccountable feeling—a feeling that does not wait to reason. Take a scorpion, for instance, whose sting, as a rule, is not dangerous: I kill him with quite as much avidity, because of the same feeling. Talking of scorpions, by the way, reminds me of monkeys and baboons, who look on the

myself, had a look at some of the gold properties, especially the Sabi Ophir reef, which is 7 feet broad, and good, with a 30 feet shaft ; and the prevailing opinion is that Umtali and its neighbourhood, as a gold-field, will be a great success. Naturally, every one interested is looking out for Rolker's expected visit and report. If it turns out nothing more, as a sanatorium and health resort, and a half-way house between Salisbury and Beira, it should do well.

No more at present, except that we are off to Masikessi to-morrow morning.

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altogether the Portuguese who stood in our way, but the tsetse fly, which is evidently a far more serious obstacle than at first supposed. Our night's repose at Sarmento was much disturbed by heavy rain and the mighty roaring of a lion, who was prowling in the vicinity of our tent, very hungry or angry, to judge by the noise he made. This was not the only one we heard, and Sauer and myself, in the early stage of the march, saw one bound away through an opening in the forest, not more than 200 yards from the road, which for a time made us a trifle uneasy. However, I presume he was not a man-eater, for we never saw him again. Indeed, as a game country, this is the finest in the world, and I am not exaggerating when I say that for days we walked through countless herds of deer, antelope, buffalo, and every wild beast imaginable, the only animals we did not see being elephants and lions, with that one exception. Indeed, a good shot, without leaving the road, could have slaughtered them wholesale.

On the 11th we saw the Pungwe river for the first time, and on the 12th we reached Bobbert's store, situated on the river, about five miles from Neves Ferreira, which is lower down. There are several stores, and quite a small settlement here, and Bobbert, who is a German, made us as comfortable as he could. The next day Mr. and Mrs. Bent, whom we had passed on the road, came in, also Deerhurst and Rouillot, who were all as pleased to arrive at this stage of the journey as we had been. Mr. Bent tells us that he thinks the Arabians are responsible for Zimbabwe, and among other interesting facts, he mentioned having come across strong traces of the Phallic worship, which is to be met with, if not common, all over India. But as our only anxiety is to get to Beira, and on the steamer, we have made arrangements to leave this evening ; so no more.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ARRIVE AT BEIRA.

From 13th to 23rd November, 1891.

AS the river steamer appears to have broken down, we hired a lighter, sailing and drifting down alternately through a low-lying mangrove country of swamps and marshes. Leaving on the evening of the 13th, we ought to have reached Beira on the following night, but on that afternoon a strong head wind sprang up, which prevented us from tacking, tore our sail to pieces, and bumped us in the most unmerciful manner against the south bank of the river, which luckily being of soft mud, did us no damage, so we had to tie up for the night in a small mangrove creek.

The two nights we spent in this lighter were an experience that I shall take away into the next world with me. There was no rest for us, the mosquitos being in such appalling swarms, and so fiendishly blood-thirsty, that if ever I have imagined a hell let loose, alive with restless furies, I did those never-to-be-forgotten nights. Nothing kept them out and away, and tobacco smoke they treated with utter contempt, so we were all wild with delirium when we got into Beira on Sunday morning (the 15th).

This place, which in Portuguese means the shore or a bank, is nothing but a thin narrow strip or spit of sand, split up into lagoons, and running into the Indian Ocean, which is the only inspiring feature about the place, while the grand expanse of the Pungwe river—from five to six miles broad—is the only elevating characteristic in the surrounding scenery, which is a low mangrove marsh covered with man-grove trees and thick scrub.

There is no water supply here, the people depending chiefly on rain, and a slightly-brackish water of a greenish hue, which the natives bring in from a distance of four or five miles, and retail at 2s. a quart.

A township has been laid out by the Portuguese authorities, but no attempt has been made in any single way to improve it, and walking about from place to place in the deep loose

sand is very trying. Owing to the scarcity of water, we were all obliged to wash and bathe in the river, the water of which, as we are only a few miles from its mouth, is quite saline!

There are several stores and two so-called hotels where you can get food, such as it is, but no board, which you are obliged to find for yourself. I am still with Sauer and Williams, who have pitched their tent in Ewing's compound. He is Johnson & Co.'s agent, and lives in a nice little iron-roofed house, and has been very civil and obliging to us.

Machado Leal, a lieutenant in the Portuguese army, is the commandant here. I have been with Ewing, who talks the language, to call on him in the fort, which he says is only five years old. Judging from the dreadful state of dilapidation in which it is, I had computed its age at a hundred years at least. One bastion has fallen to pieces. The ditch is nearly filled in with rubbish and garbage that stinks horribly. The fort is about 100 yards square, with masonry turrets in the angles, and the guns are very antiquated, useless, in fact, against modern artillery.

Machado Leal further informed us that the action of the sea is wearing away the coast north and a little way south of the fort, but that still more to the south it is adding to it, and, as the coast makes a curve inwards, it is forming a protection to the northerly portion, on which Beira stands.

After our interview, Sauer and I walked out to the farthest point of the spit, on which a lighthouse is being erected, and where a fine view of the open sea, and a grand blow, is obtained. Here we stood enjoying the blue expanse of the Indian Ocean, and drinking in quantities of ozone fresh and pure, returning as new men to our quarters.

All we have seen here of the stern-wheelers that were to have been on the Pungwe last April, are the pieces of one steamer lying on the beach, that, for some reason or other, cannot be put together. So, taking one consideration with the other, the Pungwe route, so far, has been a complete failure, and will be, so far as I can see, until the railway is made right up to Umtali at least, but, better still, to Salisbury.

The *Agnes*, a little river steamer, which we passed going up to Neves Ferreira as we were coming down, has arrived here with thirty more people, including the Bents and Maund, so we will have a frightful crush on board the *Norseman*, which is expected in every day.

There is little more to tell you of. Chamley Turner is here,

and has been waiting over a fortnight for a steamer. Also Knight-Bruce, the Bishop of Mashonaland, a fine-looking man, with an exceedingly intellectual face, with extensive sympathies, and views which are both deep and broad. There is a dearth of news in this place which is simply appalling, and all I have had to chronicle in a week is a death, from fever, of some poor young fellow who has gone a more distant voyage than he expected, and a heavy shower of rain. You must forgive the scantiness of my last few efforts, but I have been in such a fever of anxiety to get away that I have written in a great hurry, while the loss of the diary I have kept ever since I left Tuli, through the carelessness of my special carrier, has put me to much inconvenience.

The *Norseman* is in, and I have been on board. She is only a small boat, and is already very crowded, her lower decks being simply crammed to suffocation with 217 coolies, picked up from some steamer that had met with an accident at Quillimane. We shall simply be jostling one another, and how and where we are all going to stow away heaven alone knows, as there must be close on a hundred people going in her, and only berths for half that number.

I have not, as yet, said anything about the Portuguese, and the less I say about them the better. A more miserable, effete lot (such a striking contrast to their bold and adventure-loving ancestors) I have never seen. Men who, far from raising, or attempting to raise, the natives to their standard, sink, without an effort, to their low level of degradation! Men without stamina, energy, or pride—except of a false and spurious strain—who mix and cohabit with the natives, raising up a half-breed race, if anything, more effete than themselves, and content to live a life of self-indulgence, sloth, and luxury, without a thought of to-morrow and its fatal consequences.

But I am on board the *Norseman*, which waits for no one, and is off in an hour. So adieu until next I see you.

CHAPTER XLIV.

“THE MODERN COLOSSUS.”

I CANNOT conclude a book descriptive of the making of Rhodesia during the first two years, without a final allusion to, and a summing up of, subsequent events and actions in connection with the men who made it. Facts always speak for themselves far more to the point, as well as to a much wider extent, than the most florid eloquence of tongue and pen taken together ; and the acquirement of Matabeleland, the connection of Salisbury and Buluwayo by telegraph with London, the progress of the railway, are facts that are so well known as to make retrospect unnecessary. And Rhodes, in the two former questions more especially, has acted with his usual energy and promptness, as I thought and said he would when I left the country at the end of 1891. In the matter of the Beira Railway, however, he might have shewn more initiative and vigour in pushing it on—if not to Salisbury, to Umtali, at least—an advantage that would have, at the present moment of the general rising of the natives in Mashonaland, Manica, and all round, in fact, been simply incalculable and inestimable. And the money he tied up in the Trans-Continental Telegraph would, as I argued at the time, have been much more wisely invested in the railway in question.

For although he lost little or no time in continuing the extension of the Vryburg-Mafeking Railway towards Buluwayo, the other, in every sense—political, commercial, and strategical—should have received his entire attention ; and had it been completed, as it well might have been, in 1895, it is probable that the white population of Rhodesia would have been doubled or trebled, and the present rebellion more easily coped with ; but there can be little doubt that since the first conquest of the Matabele, Mashonaland has been thrown into the cold shade of neglect, first of all by the Company’s officials, and consequently by the people, who followed suit.

These, however, are evident truisms that I have no intention of further commenting on.

Events in South Africa during the past six years, and more particularly in the last six months, have marched so rapidly, and the Jameson *fiasco*—the unnatural forcing of a question, that, as I said five years ago, time and only time could accomplish in a much more effectual and certain manner, with its steady and overwhelming tide of British immigration and capital—has, in its unnatural acceleration, brought things to such an unfortunate pass that I cannot but deplore an ending so pitiful to a policy so colossal and expansive, which, up to this point, had been advanced and developed by the genius of one man, the practical capacity of another, and the staunch co-operation and adherence of the many.

That the *fiasco* has thrown back South Africa for at least twenty years, and that the Matabele-Mashona outbreak is a direct outcome of it, which must of necessity retard the progress of Rhodesia for many years to come, are deplorable facts much to be regretted.

Yet for all that, writing now after six years, when I have often heard Cecil Rhodes speak words of weight and meaning, that have since blossomed into sound and statesmanlike actions, my opinion formed in 1892-3, that he is one of the ablest Englishmen of the day, has undergone no change, in spite of the Jameson episode, and notwithstanding the conviction of Kruger and Hoffmeyr that he was its moving spirit.

Granting, however, for sake of argument, that he was, what then? A mistake, a great mistake, no doubt. But, as we know, the greatest men that have ever lived in history have been moulded out of faults, and no man has ever been great without them, and Cecil Rhodes is, I repeat most emphatically, a great man! For, after all, what are faults but erroneous impressions of men and their actions, leading to errors of conviction and judgment, which, although their consequences may extend beyond the present, are an example and an experience to a great man to be wiser for the future?

Not that I in any way defend the action of Jameson and Co., and I have no intention of speaking for or against what, after a calm and dispassionate survey of the whole affair, must be condemned as an unconstitutional act, stupidly and thoughtlessly conceived, and badly executed.

Not that I in any way connect it with Rhodes, although a knowledge of the close bond of intimacy and association that unites him with Jameson—quite apart from any damning

evidence possessed by the Transvaal Government — might easily enough, in itself, lead to some such supposition. Under the present circumstances, therefore, and in face of the trial impending over Jameson and his confederates, it is only common fairness to allow events to shape themselves without undue bias or premature judgment.

When I first saw Rhodes at Macloutsie in 1890, the impression he created on me was very similar to that left on me, some twenty years previous, by the Taj Mahal, when, for the first time, I looked upon that gorgeous monument built by the great Emperor over the ashes of her who once had been the light of his eyes and of the world. For, after all the fulsome and extraordinary praise which I had so often heard lavished upon it, I must confess that I was disappointed. Whether or not it was my own imagination which had conjured up a vision exceeding the original in architectural loveliness of colour, design, and grandeur, that was at fault, I cannot quite determine. But during a three years' residence at Agra, I subsequently saw and visited the beautiful mausoleum at least a hundred times, and on each occasion its wondrous beauty grew on me with a power overwhelming as it was irresistible. A beauty of ideal conception, embracing a happy combination of symmetry, design, and colouring, which forms an effective unit of human art and artifice which is certainly unique and almost unsurpassable ; so that it has always been an enigma to me how it was possible that I could have ever looked upon it in an unfavourable light.

And so in a great measure it was with Rhodes ! For just as the Taj is so perfect in its unparalleled artificial beauty, that only constant and close association teaches the average individual to realise its grandeur of conception and its perfection of detail, so Cecil Rhodes' great strength lies in those mental characteristics which are hidden beneath the surface of a sphynx-like vacancy of expression ; and it is not until you get into contact with him that you begin to find them out, and then not until he speaks and acts. For strength and perception — strength of mind, of will, and of purpose, and clearness and range of intellectual perception — are his strong points, and it is in his speeches, but most of all in his actions — large, healthy, and vigorous — that you discover the intellectual greatness of his plain and deceptive exterior.

If since 1890, with the late recent exception, some of the different states in South Africa have not been quite so promi-

ment as they might have been, it is because they have been thrown into the background by the doings of one man and the development of one country: the man whose name has become a household word in the extensive sphere dominated over by the glorious language of a mighty race, the foremost man in Africa, whose name, in striking contrast to his talents, is plain, simple, and unadorned by even an order. A fact which speaks volumes. For there is a magic in the name of Cecil J. Rhodes that to my mind no peerage, or mere empty honour of the kind, could either magnify or ennable. A magic that is as magnetic and far-reaching as is his own forcible and colossal personality. The man whose scheme of northern development and expansion, if it has not shed a lustre on the ancient prestige of his country, has added a great possession to the grand but already unwieldy Empire of Greater Britain!

That his scheme of joining the northern and southern extremities of Africa was not original (for the late Ismail Pasha, unstable and erratic, but a genius in his way, conceived it when Rhodes was still unknown) does not detract one iota from his greatness. For while Ismail was too chimerical and had not the stamina to carry out his idea, the Colossus has the stability and dogged determination to bring it to a successful issue. And mark me, we are not yet done with Rhodes, for if he is the man I take him to be, in spite of this deplorable episode, which means a loss of unrecoverable years, he will not remain idle, because he must find a vent for his vast and restless energy. And the vent will be in connecting South Africa with Egypt. So if our move towards Khartoum is not significant, it is at all events a step nearer and in the right direction.

Of great ideas and conceptions, Rhodes is not merely a man of words, but a man essentially of action, who by sheer force of character guides and controls those under him to carry out his policy, according to his imperious will and pleasure, just as a raging hurricane sways and bends even the strongest trees.

That he can handle men, and is well versed in the art and snares of politics, making it his policy to sink prejudices and dislikes when it suits his purpose and is politic, the history of the last few years will shew. While his cultivation of the colonial Dutch ideas, even to his house and furniture, sympathies and friends, including the Afrikander Bond, is a clear proof. Mr. Hoffmeyr, with the Bond at his back, has the voting majority, no doubt, and, so far, he may have pulled the strings; but to imagine that Rhodes was a puppet in his hands,

or anybody else's, is a huge mistake, ridiculous to anyone who has been at all behind the scenes, to whom it is quite apparent who the puppet in reality was. Events have proved this if nothing else, and if certain unforeseen circumstances had not forced the colossal hand, I feel sure that in the end he would have accomplished the aim and object of his life. And in my diary for 1893 I find this entry: "I am surprised at Rhodes' action in withdrawing his support from Solomon, and giving it to Harris. And yet I am not surprised, for the fact that he should accept a man of inferior parts, who is but a creature and a tool in his hands, in preference to a man of ability, because he is independent and refuses to be a mere automaton, shews the way the wind is blowing, and is but a move in the so-called game of northern expansion, which aims, first of all at the isolation of the Transvaal, and eventually in the unity of South Africa, with the Colossus as first president. How blinding, evidently, is the fine dust of Rhodesian policy, and how neatly the puppet hoodwinks the showman. Cecil has refused honours, no doubt, but he loves power; and, full as he is of great conceptions and unbounded ambition, he will, on the first opportunity, throw over the Bond—to-morrow, if he got the chance—and if no other way were open to him to compass his object, he would, I believe, cast off allegiance to the mother country without hesitation or sentiment; for he is a man devoid of sentiment, who would throw over men and principles as an aéronaut throws ballast out of a balloon. And yet, curious to say, he is fond of popularity, although the general opinion is that he has an utter disregard to it. But under the disguise of a rugged exterior, an apparent *non-chalance*, and a seemingly utter indifference to public opinion, lurks a vein of theatrical effect and a love that courts popular applause, which, at times, shew themselves in small but significant ways—his after-dinner excursion for the missing derelict, for instance, when, instead of assisting, he retarded the search."

It is said—so, at least, I have been informed in all seriousness—that the Jews claim the Colossus as one of their own. Whether they do so on the strength of his grasping ambition, and for the strong tenacity of purpose so markedly developed in him—one of their own characteristics, by the way—or whether it is that he is surrounded by so many of themselves; or, yet again, because of the hawk-like prominence of his nose—a feature which physiognomists affirm indicates great strength

of character—my informant could not tell me. But the very fact of the assertion shews up the true grasping nature of the elect, if it does nothing else, tempting one to speculate on the nature and character of their next claim.

I have been in contact with Rhodes many a time since, and I could give many more incidents characteristic of the man, but I think I have said enough for the present purpose.

To sum him up in conclusion, I will for the last time quote one more record made in 1894: "People may say what they like about Rhodes: his conceit may be inordinate, and that he is conscious of his own importance, his words and speeches, jingling as they do with the perpetual refrain of 'Ego,' prove conclusively enough. It is not, however, so much conceit as confidence—confidence in himself and his own powers—and after all, a man without confidence is but a poor specimen of humanity. Even his greatest enemies must recognise his undoubted abilities, and admire them as I do in the abstract; while the man himself, prominent and formidable anywhere, but pre-eminent in South Africa, commands at least admiration, if not respect.

"That he is an orator there can be no question; not that his oratory is brilliant, fiery, or impassioned, or that his elocution and enunciation are distinct and clear, or his style attractive and impressive. Not that his eloquence is like the flow of a mighty river, unceasing and unchecked—a rushing torrent of language. On the contrary, his utterances are slow, studied, well weighed, and well thought out, while his knowledge of detail is always remarkable. His delivery is jerky, and his voice is neither musical nor pleasing. Yet I maintain he is an orator, and speaks with the authority of a man who is more than confident, who is convinced in himself, and who, by the sheer strength of this conviction, and the force of a very strong character, imparts conviction to those around, and carries them away with him, for he makes his audience feel that they are in the presence of a master-mind. But it is not only in his speech that he does this. His actions speak for themselves.

"A man of decision and strong individuality, masterly, of great ambition and unconquerable will, impatient of control, case-hardened to influence, and not only deep, but one of the deepest men living. Nor is there any getting to the bottom of him by persuasion, cajolery, flattery, or even through the seductive wiles of a diplomatic Delilah, for he is impervious to the sex in general, and is, above it all, too high, too broad, and

too deep. A man who, to gain his end, would sweep scruple and principle out of his path, without hesitation or compunction.

"A great man in every sense ! Imperious to a degree, and far more absolute in his autocracy than any Czar of Russia. The man who has been frequently compared by many of our leading journals to some of the greatest names in history, and who, if he has been nothing else, has been the central figure and the modern Colossus of South Africa !"

CHAPTER XLV.

JAMESON.

JAMESON, were he not an interesting personality in himself, as Rhodes' greatest friend would be worth studying. In fact, a study of one, so close and intimate has been their association for years past, is of necessity a study of the other. Indeed, it is quite possible that when Jameson was practising as a doctor in Kimberley, as boon companions over many a game of cards or speculation, projects that have now become history were discussed between them. In some such way it must have been that Jameson, fired by the great and bold conceptions of his comrade, in spite of his caution, threw up a practice of £6000 a year—the best in South Africa—to become the right hand of the Colossus, by shaping his flexible ideas into solid acts and hard facts.

Certain it is that no mere financial or baser pecuniary motives actuated him, for, if anything, he has been a loser, I should say; but he too has ambition, and though he does not possess the mastery or iron will of his master, no man could have chosen a better lieutenant, not altogether in the sense of ability, but because of his unfailing sympathy, and of the possession of certain characteristics that are wanting in Rhodes.

That as his coadjutor to carry out and administrate in his place, he could have selected an abler, but not so suitable a man, will be readily admitted by all who know.

For Rhodes and Jameson are imbued with the same identical line of thought and ideas, while the selfsame fiery spirit of unbounded ambition inspires them, and though two separate organisms, their mental embodiment, for all practical purposes, is one and the same. The identical force, and yet so constituted that the one and stronger half, Rhodes, dominates the weaker half, Jameson, or it would be, perhaps, more correct to say, guides or controls it.

But do not misunderstand me, for I do not mean weakness in the sense that Jameson has no will of his own. Far from it, but

perhaps you will better grasp my meaning if I call it a mutual co-operation of two strong wills, so alike in every point as to be identical ; but while Rhodes, with greater powers of conception and magnetism, has risen into the controller, Jameson, with a mind more highly trained and educated in grappling with facts and conditions, quite as naturally developed into the actual administrator and practical organiser. In a few words, conception in one half, administration in the other, that acting in complete unison with each other, formed as perfect a human combination as it would be possible to find.

That something of the kind must have taken place, a fusion of two strong affinities, or call it what you will, is evident, when the fact of Jameson's abandonment of his profession is taken into consideration. At the top rung of it in South Africa, with ability sufficient to make a reputation in England or anywhere, there must have been a very powerful and unusual incentive to throw up one of the noblest professions, if not the very noblest, in existence, simply to administrate a concern whose success was doubtful, and which, at all events, required an immensity of hard work and patience in the achievement of it.

That it was neither mere ambition to become a ruler, nor the prospect of amassing filthy lucre, in Jameson's case, I feel quite certain, but due, as I have already pointed out, to the contact and cohesion of two mental affinities attracted towards one another by the common bond of a mutual sympathy.

I have also previously pointed out that Jameson, as an administrator of a new settlement, was the right man in the right place, though he was by no means perfect, but liable to error, and to overreach himself, as we have on more than one occasion seen.

But although his conduct of the first Matabele campaign was undoubtedly successful for the time being, it was never in any way or at any time complete, nor has his subsequent native policy been sufficiently drastic, as a consequence of which the smouldering fire of bloody instinct, and the racial hatred of a beaten but not subjugated race, has burst out afresh and with such renewed vigour that, far from being quelled, it has spread through the miserable and cowardly Mashonas, right down into Manica and even Portuguese territory.

The last and most fatal mistake of all, however, has been

his own absence, and the denuding the country of most of the fighting men, arms, and ammunition, to attempt a project which, with the numerical weakness of his force, and the still greater weakness in intellect of his military advisers, was simply madness. That a cautious and level-headed man of Jameson's undoubtedly capacity could have depended on the officers he had, with Willoughby as his chief of the staff, I cannot and will not believe. If he did, I am not in the least surprised at the result, and I certainly gave him credit for more common-sense, and he has sunk yet another point lower in my estimation.

And, in speaking of the raid, to classify him and his band as "heroes," is to shew an entire ignorance of the word and its meaning, as well as to reduce it from the sublimity of its pinnacle to the low level of ridicule and rhodomontade! Every true-born Englishman is brave, and when doing his duty, or when put to it for his country, or to right a wrong, he will dare as much or even more than most men. But heroes, believe me, are rare and scarce in this hard, matter-of-fact, and go-ahead age, and I, in my small way, fail to see the heroism of the act in question.

With Jameson's failure I have no sympathy, though with himself and Rhodes I have all I can spare; and, in accordance with his own ideas on morality, that a crime is not one until discovered, his raid has exposed the fact that at heart he is a true filibuster. A fact that should be well known to anyone acquainted with him and with the history of Rhodesia.

Not that I think altogether the worse of him for this, although I certainly do for undertaking a task that he was unable to perform, a task that he ought never to have attempted without being certain of success, instead of running with his head down against a stone wall, or like a mouse, right into the jaws of the lion. If we only consider well our history, from the time of Elizabeth, at all events, we must admit, if we are honest, that the Englishman at heart is a filibuster, though every respectable citizen of our empire professes to have a holy and righteous horror at the very name. And if, with the courage of our convictions, we would but admit the "*unpalatable*" truth—"unpalatable" only because of our intense hypocrisy—we would readily acknowledge that it is this spirit alone—the spirit of dare-devil adventure, excited by the restless activity of an exuberant vitality—which has made us what we are, the only colonisers of the modern world!

But I have already said enough on this point, and, though Jameson's absence in the existing crisis is most unfortunate, the presence of the Colossus is worth a host of men, and is a matter of sincere congratulation. And if the crisis is met with a firm hand, which it is now certain to be if not impeded or hampered by outside political pressure, the spreading of it among the effete and cowardly Mashonas will very soon be crushed ; and that they and the Matabele must be crushed once and for all, and taught "an everlasting" lesson, is a question that admits of no possible argument.

It is useless, in emergencies of this kind, to mince matters, let the peace-at-any-price party say what they will, for if, in the first instance, the Chartered Company were at fault in taking the country, an argument that I do not for a moment allow, the unfortunate people, the women and children more especially, who have been ruthlessly massacred, are in no way to blame. Such arguments as are advanced by the Societies of Friends and Peace, deserve to be treated only in one way, with the silence of undisguised contempt. To argue with such rabid bigots is to admit a certain amount of reason on the part of those who shew an entire absence of common sense, an utter ignorance of the composition and bent of human nature, as, also, of the ordinary principles of natural and political economy.

Apart from the well-worn arguments of the improvement of the savage and the advancement of civilisation, right through Nature, from the very lowest form of vegetable and animal organism up to the highest types of humanity, the one governing law prevails, the law of might and the survival of the fittest, and it is absolutely puerile on the part of puny humanity—which is but a vast collective assortment of plastic clay in the hands of the great Evolutor and the cunning Potter—to attempt even to dispute a law which is as immutable in its course as that of any world or planet which hangs in space.

"Peace at any price" is very splendid in theory, but to attain it would be to reach heaven, or the haven of perfection, an impossible achievement in this phase of our existence, at all events—although I believe it to be possible in another, yet to be unfolded—while man remains what he now is, human, in other words, nothing but a highly-developed and morally-educated animal, but still an animal for all that, or, at the most, a being with strong animal instincts.

With this object in view, therefore, several flexible flying columns—the number and strength of which are details to be

decided by Sir Frederic Carrington on the spot—should be organised, to sweep through the length and breadth of Rhodesia, and so utterly disorganise any semblance, even, of organised resistance on the part of the natives. And only such prompt and stringent measures will be effectual in re-establishing peace and order, as well as in preventing the rebellion from spreading all over South Africa. And it is high time that the so-called susceptibilities of the crafty Kruger were overlooked, and strong reinforcements sent out to the Cape and Natal. This, more than anything else, would have the desired effect of preventing a wide-spread native rebellion.

CHAPTER XLVI.

SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS.

ALL through this book I have not more than merely touched upon, or alluded to, South African politics, for the reason pure and simple, that to me they are altogether inexplicable—a political enigma and an unanswerable problem—while Rhodes' own policy I have scarcely more than hinted at, on only a few occasions. For the very good reason that he has kept it to himself, and if he had anyone in his entire confidence, it was Jameson, and only ~~him~~ ^{he}.

But herein I consider he shewed his common sense and penetration, for although, in accordance with Eastern ideas, there may on certain occasions be wisdom in a multitude of counsellors, in a deep game of the kind, playing, as he was, against Kruger, Leyds, and Co.—who, though not to be compared in intelligence and intellect to the Rhodes-Jameson combination, are all the more dangerous on account of their low cunning and astuteness, working, as they have been, for a united Dutch and Boerdom—it would have been the height of folly to have confided in any one but his other self—Jameson. And there can be little doubt that it was the departure from this rule—possibly to a great extent unavoidable—which betrayed the presence of, and in some measure accounted for, the failure of the ever-to-be-regretted raid.

I am not, however, in any way alluding to the raid, but to his general policy, and that part in particular—the all-absorbing ambition—that aimed at the confederation of all South African States into a unit of the great and Imperial Empire of Britain.

Although I had an inkling of what was going on in 1890-91, it was not until I left Mashonaland, and on my return to the Cape, when during 1892-93 I watched and followed the evolution of events with the closest scrutiny and the greatest interest, that I began to feel sure in my own mind as to the absolute certainty and vast immensity of the stake for which the Colossus was working with all the force and vigour of his

genius. And it was then that, in spite of my actual personal dislike for him, I recognised and admitted to myself the undoubted greatness of the man. For what is genius after all but a dogged perseverance of purpose, and a determined application of all the forces of mind and body, concentrated on and applied in the prosecution and ultimate accomplishment of a certain great and difficult object? And these qualities Cecil Rhodes possesses in every ordinary and colossal sense.

To Mr. Gladstone is usually imputed the loss of the Transvaal, by the Convention of 1881, as well as the existing crop of difficulties. But although he assuredly accentuated and aggravated the Transvaal dilemma, at the time in question, by the extraordinary and unaccountable indecision and vacillation of his policy, it is not quite correct to lay on him the entire blame, as a study of the history of our connection with South Africa will shew.

It was in 1795, that through cajolery, or in some way by cleverly hoodwinking the Prince of Orange, we annexed Cape Colony, which eight years subsequently, in a fit of political conscience, we returned to the Dutch, only to once more conquer it in 1806 by the force of arms.

In 1838 we occupied Natal for the first time, but it was not until 1842 that it was proclaimed a British Colony, the Boers in the meantime having retained possession.

And it was actually not until 1848 that we conquered and annexed the present Orange Free State, which we handed back to the Boers six years after, while those disaffected Boers, who, in order to escape a rule that they bitterly resented, had gone further afield and crossed the Vaal River, were, in 1852, allowed to declare their independence by the British Government; in consequence of which they formed themselves into a Republic, which, on the request of their own President in 1877, was annexed by us, but restored to independence in 1881.

It will, however, be seen from this glance, brief and casual as it is, that Gladstone did not create, but inherited as a political birthright, a policy of appalling vacillation and indecision almost unintelligible. Yet it cannot be denied that had he, in the first instance, been strong enough, and dealt firmly, the Transvaal would never have recovered its independence, and would, at this moment, have belonged to us, as it should by every right moral or natural, and the ambition of the greatest Englishman we have had in South Africa would have been realised ere now.

There can be no question that our policy in South Africa, from the very commencement, has been a miserable display of wavering hesitation and incompetency! A long series of blunders perpetrated—not wilfully, but, as in Ireland, with our eyes wide open—therefore open to such a construction being put upon it: due, however, in reality, to sheer ignorance of local character, conditions, and politics, to party government, with its frequent changes of policy, dictated at a distance by men only too willing to act for the best, but carried away by false sentiment, and misled by erroneous opinions. In a few words, an outcome of undue interference with local government, and a too great yielding of equality to a subdued, but obstinate, yet less intelligent, less vigorous race, backed up in England by the pressure of political opposition, and the popular outcry of certain fanatical sections of Society!

From the very beginning the Dutch have found our rule irksome, and kicked against it; and though, in a great measure, the bitterness and gall of this feeling have dwindled down, because we have, on every occasion, met them more than half-way by granting concessions of all sorts, and giving way to them on all points, the feeling has never died out, and appears on the slightest provocation—simply because, as I tried to explain on a former occasion, the Boers and ourselves are at two ends of a stretch of Time, over three centuries in length, and thirty in elasticity. And while we are progressive, and move forward by an excessive vitality, they are stationary with the contempt of an impregnable Stoicism, which anchors and secures them as firm and as fast as the roots of a giant tree striking downward into mid-earth.

We are, in fact, the running water of a mighty river of humanity flowing unchecked and irresistible, while they are a stagnant slime-covered morass. Of course, there are many exceptions among them who are quick, ready, and intelligent, as I have already admitted, and who, imbued with Rhodes' magnetism, have awoke to the fact that life is a moving spirit, and not one long dream of decaying inertion.

The mistake we at first made, and which we have all along sustained, has been to allow the Dutch more than equal control in the government of a country that we have made what it is, beyond dispute. Dual control has been, is, and always will be, a mistake. Give them their political rights, and everything they are entitled to; but let it be distinctly understood that there can be only one dominant Power in South Africa—that we are the Power in question, who will not

brook either inside disaffection, or outside interference. For not only in our own interests, but in the interests of the Dutch themselves, and of the large native population, most certainly we must maintain our supremacy at all costs.

All that it is now necessary for us to do is to stick to our guns, and uphold our position—a position won by the bayonet, and sustained through the force of superior intelligence and greater energy—and this we can only do by a steady, steadfast, and unflinching policy, and by a continuous stream of English capital and emigration, so that in time we may secure an overwhelming majority and swamp the conflicting element. And above all things, *time*—that first and most essential factor in war or politics—must be taken into co-operation as well as consideration.

And in this way alone can we ever hope to make South Africa united. The Boers are a long-suffering, phlegmatic race, and, either in diplomacy or war, we must meet them with their own weapons.

The impetuosity that culminated in Jameson's *fiasco* has upset the five previous years of a slow, steady but sure policy—the only policy to ensure success—and thrown us back for years. But we too can exercise patience if we like, and when we choose, and with patience and perseverance, and the maintenance of supremacy as our guiding principle, we will make up for the time that has been so impulsively thrown away, and in the end must win the day.

I sympathise with the Dutch, and to a certain extent admire them, but the sooner Kruger, Leyds, and Co. recognise that any hope of a United Dutch Republic is but the chimera of a hope, as vague as that Tantalus of Nature the mirage, the better for themselves and every one concerned. So far the game of diplomacy has favoured Oom Paul the Unctuous, but it will favour him no further, because in the hands of such Statesmen as are now responsible for the prestige of England, we need have no fear of consequences.

I have not yet mentioned the Africander Bond, because, although it is all very well in its narrow one-sided way, it has done no good to the country at large, and is essentially a one-sided political factor, representing Dutch interests pure and simple—in other words, only the farming, and therefore the less advanced, portion of the population—while the real intelligence and wealth of the country, the professional and trading classes, also the British and most important section, are not in any way represented. In fact the Bond is exclusively and

entirely Dutch, and aims at Dutch supremacy, let them say what they will to the contrary.

Three years ago I wrote : "Monopoly in politics, as in everything else, is, I maintain, unhealthy and dangerous, and apt to lead to serious evils, and I should, on principle, like to see a vigorous opposition to the Bond. It is high time for English Colonists to combine and form themselves into an association to counteract and defeat what is purely a racial league antagonistic to British supremacy, and therefore to the reform and advancement of what has all the elements of a splendid country." But nothing was done, and Englishmen, engrossed in making money, allowed their political interests to lie fallow until the late complications, which, if they have had no other result, have, I am pleased to say, forced them to recognise the fact that, if British supremacy is to be upheld, all those who adhere to the Mother Country must be up and doing. Of course this would not have suited Rhodes, as his policy was to keep in with the Dutch, but if he was true to Imperial interests (and I have my doubts) he might in some indirect way have set in motion an opposition league.

What we have done elsewhere—in India, Canada, and, last but not least, Australia—we might have done in South Africa ; for what would have become of these magnificent dominions if vacillation and want of purpose had been the keystone of our policy ?

To think that the dominant power should on nearly all points, and on every side, have given way to the weaker race, may, from a philanthropic point of view, be noble and magnanimous, but looked at from the practical basis of sound statesmanship, it is extreme folly. What other civilised nation in the world, I should like to know, would have acted as we have all through done ? And had France, Germany, or Russia been in our place, the history of South Africa, and the position of the Dutch, would have been very different ; and, after all, they may thank their stars that they have had us to deal with, and not even the "sympathising" German.

The progress of South Africa has been retarded twenty years at least, but, in spite of this, there is a glorious future before it, if we only remain true to ourselves. Then from Cape Point to the Zambesi, and even northward, we shall have a united South Africa, under one flag, loyal to themselves and to the land which produced and sent them out to distant climes, to make a great nation still greater.

CHAPTER XLVII.

LORD LOCH.

IT would be impossible to discuss South African affairs of the past six years without some reference to Lord (then Sir Henry) Loch, whom I look upon as having been the right man in the right place at a decidedly critical period of its history—during, for instance, the initiation and development of northern expansion, when the Transvaal itself was in an uneasy and disturbed condition owing to the agitation of the Uitlanders for a settlement of their grievances, and when negotiations were proceeding as to the ultimate fate of Swazieland.

I have no time to enter into details, but there can be little doubt that when the history of this unsettled and stirring period is written, Lord Loch will stand out well as a ruler of ability, firmness, and prudence. In his dual capacity of Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner of South Africa, he had a most difficult *rôle* to play, but he played it with unusual skill, and it was in the playing of it that his uncommon tact and courtesy went a very long way.

In ordinary times even, the dual office of Governor and High Commissioner is by no means an easy one. In the first position it is necessary to study the welfare of the Colony in the aggregate, and as a unit intact, at the same time that it is equally incumbent to satisfy and humour the different parties of Colonists, who are all the more difficult to humour on account of conflicting elements, with their varied grievances or wants, and their totally opposite way of looking at the same thing. While, in quite another direction to this, as High Commissioner, it is not only imperative not to run counter to the feelings and sympathies of conflicting Colonial elements, who, with perhaps a combined policy of independent and radical views, are ticklish people to deal with; but it is also an equal proportion of the responsibility to protect and uphold Imperial interests inside as well as outside the Colonial sphere. Add to this a change of Imperial Governments, with a consequent deviation, if not change of front, in Imperial policy, and

a loss or gain of the very requisite force of *morale* and prestige, and the unenviable dual position of our South African Viceroy can well be imagined.

In spite of this anomaly and duality, however, Lord Loch ruled in a way that gained him respect, if not popularity, all over South Africa, although it is popularly supposed that among the Boers, with whom he was a great favourite, his fine physique and long beard, more than anything else, contributed to his popularity. This, no doubt, in the first instance created a good impression, but that his dignity of bearing, charm of personality, and high-minded impartiality did the rest, there can, I think, be no question.

I have on more than one occasion heard it said that, in himself, and without the assistance of Lady Loch, Lord Loch has not the ability, and would not have earned the reputation he has.

However this may be, all I can say is that, in his own personality, he has sufficient tact and power of discrimination, combined with sound, practical common sense and strength of character to enable him to discharge the onerous and particularly delicate duties of an intricate post. At the same time he deservedly commands the highest respect and admiration from all classes, as an upright, honourable, and straightforward gentleman, who has done his duty in a particularly lofty and straightforward manner, keeping aloof from speculations of any kind, either political or financial, on whom not even the shadow of suspicion has fallen.

A man in every way qualified to carry out and fulfil the arduous *rôle* that devolved on him, in his dual capacity of Colonial Governor and Imperial High Commissioner, during a period of stirring events, which brought him into contact with strong men and vigorous measures, and to whose safe keeping the honour of the country was well entrusted. And who, because of his able and judicious policy, as well as on account of his own high standard of nobility, deserves to be placed in the front rank of South African Governors, and on an equal footing with such men as Sir George Grey and Sir Bartle Frere.

THE MEN WHO MADE RHODESIA.

I CANNOT conclude this book in a more fitting way, than by once more alluding to the men who, by the toil of their hands, the sweat of their brows, and, above all, by the sacrifice of their lives, "made," in the true and literal sense of the word, the country that now bears the name of the master craftsman, whose genius conceived the idea, and whose magnetic force inspired them with his own vigorous initiative.

All through, I have on every possible occasion spoken in terms of the highest praise of the rank and file, but nothing I have said, and indeed nothing I can say, is sufficient to convey to the outside public even an impression of their immense and sterling worth, either as men, or as atomic fractions of a great and gigantic political unit! And no language of mine can express the sincere respect and genuine admiration I always felt, and still feel, for those who smilingly risked everything to gain, in many instances, bare existence merely, and in others, inglorious death and oblivion. That the rank and file of humanity, without a leader, must of necessity resolve itself into an unruly, brainless mob, is admissible. But, on the other hand, a leader without good men, that is, strong, brave men, capable of patient endurance, physical and moral, with large hearts and sympathies, is practically helpless.

That there was a magic in the name of Cecil Rhodes, as well as in the intense magnetism of his personality, and to a lesser extent in that of Jameson, which established a bond of mutual sympathy between leaders and led, that has resulted in a success so magnificent, who can dispute? For in spite of the present crisis, I still call Rhodesia a great success, and a living monument of British intelligence and enterprise, and I predict that within thirty years it will, or at least ought to be, the fairest and richest province in the whole continent of so-called darkness.

But while the name of Cecil Rhodes will live, those of men who numbered in their ranks such names as Turner, Lendy, Forbes, Wilson, Heyman, Fitzgerald, Dillon, Hackwell, Van

der Byl, Van Wyk, De Villiers, Van Heerden, Devine, Chinnery, Reed, Cunningham, Montgomery, and hundreds more, many of whom, poor fellows, have already gone to an early account, will have been forgotten in the next generation !

This is but the way of humanity, so I can only say in conclusion, that if their names will not live in history, their memories at least shall be cherished and revered by those friends who, like myself, are proud to have been associated with such brave and manly comrades.

It is sometimes said that, as a nation, we are deteriorating, but no one who saw how Rhodesia was constructed can agree with a statement so rash and so untrue. And I think we may rest assured that the vitality of our race is still unimpaired, for there is little or no difference in the stamina or courage of the giants who, under Cromwell, established for once and aye the liberty and grandeur of England on a firm and lasting basis, fulfilling to the letter the grand and prophetic words of great and glorious John Milton, "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam," and those of the men who made Rhodesia.

The spread of our island country into a mighty Empire, and the splendid deeds that have left their undying seal and impress on every page, not only of European, but of the world's history, since these words were spoken, through the invincible and indomitable spirit of her ever-willing sons—such as those of whom I am speaking—are in themselves a tangible realisation of the dream of the blind Milton—Poet and Puritan.

Long may England and her colonies produce such men, and while they continue to do so, the question of an Imperial Empire, now only a visionary dream, may indeed blossom into a solid reality as the greatest political factor that the world has ever seen !



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